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Carols of Cockayne

Henry S. Leigh.

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

CAROLS OF COCKAYNE.

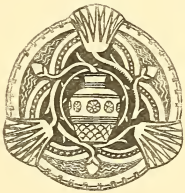
PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

CAROLS OF COCKAYNE.

BY

HENRY S. LEIGH.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALFRED CONCANEN.



THE THIRD EDITION.

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1874.

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TO

TOM HOOD, ESQ^RE.,

THESE VERSES ARE

Dedicated

BY

HIS FRIEND AND WORKFELLOW,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE following trifles have already made their appearance in various periodicals. The limit of their pretension is obvious from their individual brevity and collective title; with few exceptions, they were intended simply as drawing-room songs. Without aspiring to the high level of the days when Praed, Bayly, Hood, Fitzgerald, Theodore Hook, and the two Smiths wrote for music, may I flatter myself that these Carols are at least equal in point of taste (if not in point of humour) to certain light and lively ballads that are at present popular through the medium of the music-halls?

Some readers will probably think the name of this book suspiciously similar to that of Mr Frederick Locker's charming *London Lyrics.* Let me anticipate a charge of plagiarism by observing that Mr Locker himself was kind enough to send me the suggestion for my present title.

To those gentlemen who have given me permission to republish various verses in this collection, I am sincerely obliged.

H. S. L.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE TWINS,	9
UN PAS QUI COÛTE,	11
THE GIFT OF THE GAB,	13
BEHIND THE SCENES,	16
"WITH MUSICAL SOCIETY,"	19
THINGS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN,	22
THE OLYMPIC BALL,	24
THE TWO AGES,	27
STANZAS TO AN INTOXICATED FLY,	29
CHIVALRY FOR THE CRADLE—	
1. THE ROMAUNT OF HUMPTY-DUMPTY,	32
2. A LEGEND OF BANBURY-CROSS,	33
3. THE BALLAD OF BABYE BUNTING,	34
A CLUMSY SERVANT,	35

PAGE

A NURSERY LEGEND, ... 37

AN ALLEGORY, ... 39

OVER THE WATER, ... 41

AN UNAPPRECIATED CRICHTON, . . . 44

ONLY SEVEN, ... 47

SEE-SAW, ... 49

A WILD HUNT, ... 51

A VERY COMMON CHILD, ... 55

CROOKED ANSWERS—

1. VERE DE VERE, ... 58

2. MAUD, ... 60

A BEGGING LETTER, ... 62

A COCKNEY'S EVENING SONG, . . . 65

ROMANTIC RECOLLECTIONS, ... 67

THE MAD GRANDPAPA, ... 70

SHABBY-GENTEEL, ... 73

CUPID'S MAMMA, ... 75

THE CRUSADER'S FAREWELL, ... 77

LAYS OF MANY LANDS—

1. COSSIMBAZAR, ... 79

2. SARAGOSSA, ... 81

3. CLARENS, ... 82

4. VENICE, ... 84

PAGE

THE SEASONS, ... 85

BROKEN VOWS, ... 87

WHERE—AND OH! WHERE? 89

A FIT OF THE BLUES, ... 91

ROTTEN ROW, ... 93

A LAST RESOURCE, ... 95

WEATHERBOUND IN THE SUBURBS, . . . 99

MIDAS, ... 101

TO A TIMID LEECH, ... 103

ANACREONTIC, ... 105

A CHILD'S TWILIGHT, ... 107

THE HOUSE ON THE TOP OF A HILL, ... 109

MEN I DISLIKE, ... 111

NOT QUITE FAIR, ... 113

WISDOM AND WATER, ... 114

'TWAS EVER THUS, ... 116

MY SONG, ... 117

BOW BELLS, ... 119

THE PLOT OF A ROMANCE, ... 122

THE SUBJECTS OF SONG, ... 124

AN OLD CYNIC, ... 126

THE NIGHTINGALE, ... 129

TO MY BRAIN, ... 132

PAGE

WANTED, A SINGER, ... 133

ANTICIPATIONS, ... 135

THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES, ... 137

THE OLD WAG, ... 140

ETIQUETTE, ... 142

A PLAIN ANSWER, ... 145

IN A HUNDRED YEARS, ... 147

EVENING, ... 148

MY POLITICS, ... 150

THE MISERIES OF GENIUS, ... 152

A DAY FOR WISHING, ... 155

THE DILIGENCE DRIVER, ... 157

THE BALLAD OF THE BARYTONE, ... 159

SONGS OF THE SICK ROOM—

1. COD LIVER OIL, ... 161

2. NIGHT AND MORNING, ... 162

3. GENERAL DEBILITY, ... 163

THE COMPACT, ... 165

THE VISION OF THE ALDERMAN, ... 169

EVENING DRESS, ... 172

WINE, ... 175

MY ULTIMATUM, ... 177

ALL ALONE, ... 179

PAGE

"OH NIGHTS AND SUPPERS," ETC., ... 181

THE WEATHER, ... 183

'ON CORPULENCE," 185

THE MOONLIGHT SONATA, ... 188

OCCASIONAL VERSES—

CHATEAUX D'ESPAGNE, ... 195

TO A CERTAIN SOMEBODY, ... 199

THE LORD MAYOR'S APOTHEOSIS, . . . 202

THE END OF AN OLD YEAR, ... 205

CAROLS OF COCKAYNE.

THE TWINS.

IN form and feature, face and limb,
I grew so like my brother
That folks got taking me for him
And each for one another.
It puzzled all our kith and kin,
It reach'd an awful pitch;
For one of us was born a twin
And not a soul knew which.

One day (to make the matter worse),
Before our names were fix'd,
As we were being wash'd by nurse,
We got completely mix'd.

And thus, you see, by Fate's decree,
(Or rather nurse's whim),
My brother John got christen'd *me*,
And I got christen'd *him*.

This fatal likeness even dogg'd
My footsteps when at school,
And I was always getting flogg'd—
For John turn'd out a fool.
I put this question hopelessly
To every one I knew,—
What *would* you do, if you were me,
To prove that you were *you?*

Our close resemblance turn'd the tide
Of my domestic life;
For somehow my intended bride
Became my brother's wife.
In short, year after year the same
Absurd mistakes went on;
And when I died—the neighbours came
And buried brother John!

(*Published with music by Messrs Cramer.*)

UN PAS QUI COÛTE.

I'VE a genius or a talent—I perceive it pretty clearly
In pursuing an ambition or in climbing up a tree—
For never *quite* attaining, but attaining *very nearly*
To my aspiration's altitude, whatever it may be.
'Tis a faculty that haunts me with an obstinate persistence,
For I felt it in my boyhood, and I feel it in my prime,—
All the efforts and endeavours I have made in my existence
Have invariably ended "but a step from the sublime."

As a boy I made a tender of my tenderest affection,
In a lovely little sonnet to the fairest of the fair:
(Though nothing but a youngster, I 've preserved the recollection
Of her tyranny, her beauty, and the way she did her hair.)
She was married, I remember, to a person in the City,—
I consider'd him remarkably obtrusive at the time;
So I quitted my enslaver with a lofty look of pity,
For I felt my situation "but a step from the sublime."

Being confident that Cupid was a little gay deceiver,
I forgot my disappointment in a struggle after Fame;
I had caught the rage of writing as a child may catch a fever,
So I took to making verses as a way to make a name.

When I publish'd a collection of my efforts as a writer—
With a minimum of reason and a maximum of rhyme—
I am proud to say that nobody could well have been politer
Than the critics, for they call'd it "but a step from the sublime."

I was laudably ambitious to extend my reputation,
And I plann'd a pretty novel on a pretty novel plan;
I would make it independent both of sin and of "sensation,"
And my villain should be pictured as a persecuted man.
For your BULWERS and your BRADDONS and your COLLINSES may grovel
In an atmosphere of horror and a wilderness of crime;
Twas for *me* to controvert them, and I did so in a novel
Which was commonly consider'd "but a step from the sublime."

I have master'd metaphysics—I have mounted on the pinions
Both of Painting and of Music—and I rather think I know
Ev'ry nook and ev'ry corner of Apollo's whole dominions,
From the top of Mount Parnassus down to Paternoster Row.
I have had my little failures, I have had my great successes—
And Parnassus, I assure you, is a weary hill to climb;
But the lowest and the meanest of my enemies confesses
That he very often thinks me "but a step from the sublime.

THE GIFT OF THE GAB.

A LECTURE ON ELOCUTION.

YOU have read how Demosthenes walk'd on the beach,
With his mouth full of pebbles, rehearsing a speech—
Till the shell-fish and sea-gulls pronounced him a bore,
And the sea met his gravest remarks with a roar.

In fact, if you ever learnt Greek, you 'll confess
That it 's hardly the right kind of tongue to impress
An intelligent lobster or well-inform'd crab,
With the deepest respect for the Gift of the Gab.

Still Eloquence gives men a wonderful power,
And it often strikes me, after sitting an hour
At a lecture on something I don't understand,
That the Gift of the Gab is decidedly grand.
Indeed, I am frequently heard to declare,
If the Queen of the Fairies would answer my prayer,
I should instantly drop on my knees to Queen Mab,
Crying, Grant me, oh grant me, the Gift of the Gab.

If you 'd hear the true summit of Eloquence reach'd
Go to church when a charity-sermon is preach'd;
Where, with hands in his pockets and tears in his eyes,
Ev'ry soft-hearted sinner contributes and cries.
I think, if you look in the plate, you'll opine
That the sermon you heard was uncommonly fine,
And that ev'ry Oxonian and ev'ry Cantab
Ought to cultivate early the Gift of the Gab.

But it's after a dinner at Freemasons' Hall
That the orator's talent shines brightest of all;
When his eye becomes glazed and his voice becomes thick,
And he's had so much hock he can only say *hic!*
So the company leave him to slumber and snore
Till he's put in a hat and convey'd to the door;

And he finds, upon reaching his home in a cab,
That his wife rather shines in the Gift of the Gab.

Then there 's Gab in the senate and Gab at the bar,
But I fear their description would lead me too far;
And (last but not least) there is Gab on the stage,
Which I couldn't exhaust if I sang for an age
But, if there are matters that puzzle you still,
You may take up an *Enfield* and go through a drill,
Which will teach you much more than a hurried confab
With regard to that art call'd the Gift of the Gab.

BEHIND THE SCENES.

LONG, long ago I had an aunt
Who took me to the play:
An act of kindness that I shan't
Forget for many a day.
I was a youngster at the time,
Just verging on my teens,
And fancied that it must be "prime"
To go *behind the scenes.*

I ventured to express the same
In quite a candid way,
And shock'd my aunt—a sober dame,
Though partial to the play.

'Twas just the moment when Macbeth
(Whose voice resembled Kean's)
Had finished planning Duncan's death,
And rushed *behind the scenes.*

I recollect that evening yet,
And how my aunt was grieved;
And, oh! I never shall forget
The lecture I received.
It threw a light upon the class
Of knowledge that one gleans
By being privileged to pass
His time *behind the scenes.*

The Heroine I worshipp'd then
Was fifty, I should think;
My Lord the commonest of men,
My Lover fond of drink.
The Fairies I believed so fair
Were not by any means
The kind of people one would care
To meet *behind the scenes.*

I cannot boast that I enjoy
  The stage-illusion still ;
I 'm growing far too old a boy
  To laugh or cry at will.
But I can cast a critic's eye
  On mimic kings and queens,
And nothing ever makes me sigh
  To get *behind the scenes.*

Ah ! shallow boastings—false regrets !
  The world is but a stage
Where Man, poor player, struts and frets
  From infancy to age ;
And then leaps blindly, in a breath,
  The space that intervenes
Between our stage-career and Death,
  Who lurks *behind the scenes !*

"WITH MUSICAL SOCIETY."

LOOK'D for lodgings, long ago,
Away from London's fogs and fusses;
A rustic Paradise, you know,
Within a walk of trains or 'busses.
I made my choice, and settled down
In such a lovely situation!—
About a dozen miles from town,
And very near a railway-station.

Within my pastoral retreat
No creditor, no care intruded;
My happiness was quite complete
(The "comforts of a home" included).

I found the landlord most polite,
  His wife, if possible, politer ;—
Their two accomplish'd daughters quite
  Electrified the present writer.

A nicer girl than Fanny Lisle
  To sing a die-away duet with,
(Say something in the Verdi style,)
  Upon my life I never met with.
And yet I waver'd in my choice ;
  For I believe I 'm right in saying
That nothing equall'd Fanny's voice,
  Unless it was Maria's playing.

If music be the food of Love,
  That was the house for Cupid's diet ;
Those two melodious girls, by Jove,
  Were never for an instant quiet.
I own that Fanny's voice was sweet,
  I own Maria's touch was pearly ;
But music 's not at all a treat
  For those who get it late and early.

The charms that soothe a savage breast
  Have got a *vice versâ* fashion
Of putting folks who have the best
  Of tempers in an awful passion :
And, when it reach'd a certain stage,
  I must confess I couldn't stand it.
I positively swore with rage
  And stamp'd and scowl'd like any bandit.

I paid my rent on quarter-day ;
  Pack'd up my luggage in a hurry,
And, quick as lightning, fled away
  To other lodgings down in Surrey.
I 'm fairly warn'd—and not in vain ;
  For one resolve that I have made is—
Not to be domiciled again
  With any musical young ladies.

THINGS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

IN the twilight of November's
  Afternoons I like to sit,
Finding fancies in the embers
  Long before my lamp is lit;
Calling Memory up and linking
  Bygone day to distant scene;
Then, with feet on fender, thinking
  Of the things that might have been.

Cradles, wedding-rings, and hatchments
  Glow alternate in the fire.
Early loves and late attachments
  Blaze a second—and expire.
With a moderate persistence
  One may soon contrive to glean
Matters for a mock existence
  From the things that might have been.

Handsome, amiable, and clever—
  With a fortune and a wife;—
So I make my start whenever
  I would build the fancy life.
After all my bright ideal,
  What a gulf there is between
Things that are, alas! too real,
  And the things that might have been.

Often thus, alone and moody,
  Do I act my little play—
Like a ghostly Punch and Judy,
  Where the dolls are grave and gay—
Till my lamplight comes and flashes
  On the phantoms I have seen,
Leaving nothing but the ashes
  Of the things that might have been.

THE OLYMPIC BALL.

T 'S a classical fact very few know
(If any one knows it at all),
That Jove once prevail'd upon Juno
To issue her cards for a ball.
Olympus, of course, was delighted;
The notion was charming—so new!
And the whole of the gods were invited,
The whole of the goddesses too;
Including a few lucky mortals,
Especially well known to fame,
(For Olympus ne'er open'd its portals,
Except to the *crême de la crême.*)

At eleven the guests were arriving,
All drest up remarkably grand;
At midnight Apollo came driving
Full pelt, in a neat four-in-hand!

In passing Parnassus he'd popp'd in,
  And brought on the Muses inside;
Minerva soon afterwards dropp'd in,
  And Vulcan, escorting his bride.
Lovely Venus was quite condescending,
  (But chroniclers freely confess,
She was not in the habit of spending
  Extravagant sums upon dress.)

The ball-room, one couldn't help feeling,
  Was got up regardless of cost;
And the satyrs and nymphs on the ceiling
  Were worthy of Etty or Frost.
The band that was hir'd for the dancers
  (The best they could possibly get)
Look'd down with disdain on the "Lancers,"
  And stuck to the "Court Minuet."
Young Ganymede carried round ices,
  And Hebe (a pert-looking minx)
Cut the pineapple up into slices,
  While Bacchus took charge of the drinks.

Terpsichore danced like a feather;
  In fact, the spectators agreed

That she and young Zephyr together
  Made very good partners indeed.
Then Momus began to grow witty;
  The Graces oblig'd with a glee;
While Pan sang a pastoral ditty,
  And Neptune a song of the sea!
Minerva sat pompously boring
  The Muses with blue-stocking talk;
And Bacchus was put to bed snoring,
  Completely unable to walk.

An hour before daylight was shining
  The prudish Diana had flown
To the spot where Endymion was pining
  To meet her by moonlight alone.
The next to depart was Apollo,
  Who leapt on his chariot at seven:
No eye in Olympus could follow
  The track of his coursers through heaven!
The lamps were beginning to burn out,
  And sunshine was flooding the hall,
When the last who thought proper to turn out
  Drove homeward from Jupiter's ball.

THE TWO AGES.

FOLKS were happy as days were long
In the old Arcadian times ;
When Life seem'd only a dance and song
In the sweetest of all sweet climes.
Our world grows bigger, and, stage by stage,
As the pitiless years have roll'd,
We 've quite forgotten the Golden Age,
And come to the Age of Gold.

Time went by in a sheepish way
Upon Thessaly's plains of yore.
In the nineteenth century lambs at play
Mean mutton, and nothing more.
Our swains at present are far too sage
To live as one liv'd of old :
So they couple the *crook* of the Golden Age
With a *hook* in the Age of Gold.

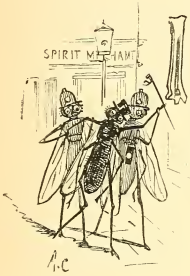
From Corydon's reed the mountains round
Heard news of his latest flame,

And Tityrus made the woods resound
  With echoes of Daphne's name.
They kindly left us a lasting gage
  Of their musical art, we 're told ;
And the Pandean pipe of the Golden Age
  Brings mirth to the Age of Gold.

Dwellers in huts and in marble halls—
  From Shepherdess up to Queen—
Cared little for bonnets, and less for shawls,
  And nothing for crinoline.
But now Simplicity 's *not* the rage,
  And it 's funny to think how cold
The dress they wore in the Golden Age
  Would seem in the Age of Gold.

Electric telegraphs, printing, gas,
  Tobacco, balloons, and steam,
Are little events that have come to pass
  Since the days of that old *régime*.
And, spite of Lemprière's dazzling page,
  I 'd give—though it might seem bold—
A hundred years of the Golden Age
  For a year in the Age of Gold.

STANZAS TO AN INTOXICATED FLY.



IT'S a singular fact that whenever I order
My goblet of GUINNESS or bumper of BASS,
Out of ten or a dozen that sport round the border
Some fly turns a somersault into my glass.
Oh! it's not that I grudge him the liquor he's tasted,
(Supposing him partial to ale or to stout),
But consider the time irretrievably wasted
In trying to fish the small wanderer out.

Ah! believe me, fond fly, 'tis excessively sinful,
This habit which knocks even bluebottles up:

Just remember what CASSIO, on getting a skinful,
  Observ'd about "ev'ry inordinate cup!"
Reflect on that proverb, diminutive being,
  Which tells us "Enough is as good as a feast;"
And, mark me, there's nothing more painful than seeing
  An insect behaving so much like a beast.

Nay, in vain would you seek to escape while I 'm talking,
  And shake from your pinions the fast-clinging drops,
It is only too clear, from your efforts at walking,
  That after your malt you intend to take hops.
Pray, where is your home? and oh! how shall you get there?
  And what will your wife and your family think?
Pray, how shall you venture to show the whole set there
  That PATERFAMILIAS is given to drink.

Oh, think of the moment when Conscience returning
  Shall put the brief pleasures of Bacchus to flight;
When the tongue shall be parch'd and the brow shall be burning,
  And most of to-morrow shall taste of to-night!
For the toast shall be dry, and the tea shall be bitter,
  And all through your breakfast this thought shall intrude;
That a little pale brandy and Seltzer is fitter
  For such an occasion than animal food.

I have known, silly fly, the delight beyond measure—
  The blissful sensation, prolong'd and intense—
The rapturous, wild, and ineffable pleasure,
  Of drinking at somebody else's expense.
But I own—and it's not without pride that I own it—
  Whenever some friend in his generous way
Bids me drink without paying, I simply postpone it,
    And pay for my liquor the whole of next day!

(*Published, with music, by Messrs Metzler and Co., Great Marlborough Street.*)

CHIVALRY FOR THE CRADLE.

No. 1.—The Romaunt of Humpty-Dumpty.

'TIS midnight, and the moonbeam sleeps
  Upon the garden sward:
My lady in yon turret keeps
  Her tearful watch and ward.
"Beshrew me!" mutters, turning pale,
  The stalwart seneschal;
"What's he that sitteth, clad in mail,
  Upon our castle wall?

"Arouse thee, friar of orders gray;
  What, ho! bring book and bell!
Ban yonder ghastly thing, I say;
  And, look ye, ban it well.
By cock and pye, the Humpty's face!"—
  The form turn'd quickly round;
Then totter'd from its resting-place—

* * * *

  That night the corse was found.

The king, with hosts of fighting men,
  Rode forth at break of day;
Ah! never gleam'd the sun till then
  On such a proud array.
But all that army, horse and foot,
  Attempted, quite in vain,
Upon the castle wall to put
  The Humpty up again.

No. 2.—A Legend of Banbury-Cross.

Started my lord from a slumber and roar'd,
"Sirrah, go bring me my buckler and sword!
Saddle my steed! Ere he next have a feed,
I' fackens, the brute will be weary indeed;
For I and my gray must be off and away
To Banbury-Cross at the dawn of the day."

People came down unto Banbury town,
In holiday doublet and holiday gown;
They muster'd in force, as a matter of course,
To see an old woman ride on a white horse.
Sir Thomas the May'r had been heard to declare
It was likely to prove an exciting affair.

Shouts of acclaim from the multitude came,
And clapping of hands for that elderly dame ;
Who, as history goes, had the newest of clothes,
And rings on her fingers and bells on her toes.
Ting-a-ting, ting ! Ding-a-ding, ding !
There was never beheld such a wonderful thing.

No. 3.—The Ballad of Babye Bunting.

The Knight is away in the merry green wood,
Where he hunts the wild rabbit and roe:
He is fleet in the chase as the late Robin Hood—
He is fleeter in quest of the foe.

The nurse is at home in the castle, and sings
To the babe that she rocks at her breast :
She is crooning of love and of manifold things,
And is bidding the little one rest.

"Oh, slumber, my darling ! oh, slumber apace !
For thy father will shortly be here ;
And the skin of some rabbit that falls in the chase
Shall be thine for a tippet, my dear."

A CLUMSY SERVANT.

NATURE, Nature ! you're enough
To put a quaker in a huff
Or make a martyr grumble.
Whenever something rich and rare–
On earth, at sea, or in the air—
Is placed in your especial care
You always let it tumble.

You don't, like other folks, confine
Your fractures to the hardware line,
And break the trifles *they* break :
But, scorning anything so small,
You take our nights and let them fall,
And in the morning, worst of all,
You go and let the day break.

You drop the rains of early Spring
(That set the wide world blossoming) ;—
The golden beams that mellow

Our grain towards the harvest-prime ;
You drop, too, in the autumn-time,
With breathings from a colder clime,
    The dead leaf, sere and yellow.

You drop and drop ;—without a doubt
You 'll go on dropping things about,
    Through still and stormy weather
Until a day when you shall find
You feel aweary of mankind,
And end by making up your mind
    To drop us altogether.

A NURSERY LEGEND.

OH! listen, little children, to a proper little song
Of a naughty little urchin who was always doing wrong:
He disobey'd his mammy, and he disobey'd his dad,
And he disobey'd his uncle, which was very near as bad.

He wouldn't learn to cypher, and he wouldn't learn to write,
But he *would* tear up his copy-books to fabricate a kite;
And he used his slate and pencil in so barbarous a way,
That the grinders of his governess got looser ev'ry day.

At last he grew so obstinate that no one could contrive
To cure him of a theory that two and two made five;
And, when they taught him how to spell, he show'd his wicked whims
By mutilating Pinnock and mislaying Watts's Hymns.

Instead of all such pretty books, (which *must* improve the mind,)
He cultivated volumes of a most improper kind;
Directories and almanacks he studied on the sly,
And gloated over Bradshaw's Guide when nobody was by,

From such a course of reading you can easily divine
The condition of his morals at the age of eight or nine.
His tone of conversation kept becoming worse and worse,
Till it scandalis'd his governess and horrified his nurse.
He quoted bits of Bradshaw that were quite unfit to hear,
And recited from the Almanack, no matter who was near:
He talked of Reigate Junction and of trains both up and down,
And referr'd to men who call'd themselves Jones, Robinson, and
Brown.

But when this naughty boy grew up he found the proverb true,
That Fate one day makes people pay for all the wrong they do.
He was cheated out of money by a man whose name was Brown,
And got crippled in a railway smash while coming up to town.
So, little boys and little girls, take warning while you can,
And profit by the history of this unhappy man.
Read Dr Watts and Pinnock, dears; and when you learn to spell,
Shun Railway Guides, Directories, and Almanacks as well!

AN ALLEGORY.

WRITTEN IN DEEP DEJECTION.

ONCE, in the gardens of delight,
I pluck'd the fairest, fullest rose;
But (while I prest its petals tight
Against the threshold of my nose)
That loathsome centipede, Remorse,
Invaded with a stealthy tread
My nasal organ, and of course
Soon reached the middle of my head.

That hideous tenant crawls and creeps
About the chambers of my brain,
He never pauses—never sleeps—
Nor thinks of coming out again.

The movements of his hundred feet
  Are gentler than the autumn breeze;
But I dislike to feel him eat
  My cerebellum by degrees.

With snuff, tobacco, Preston salts,
  And various other potent smells,
I strive to fumigate the vaults
  In which the devastator dwells.
I pull my hair out by the root—
  I dash my head against the door—
It only makes the hateful brute
  A trifle noisier than before.

Then tell me not that Joy's bright flow'r
  Upon this canker'd heart may bloom,
Like toadstools on a time-worn tow'r,
  Or dandelions on a tomb.
I mourn departed Hope in vain,
  For briny tears may naught avail;
You cannot catch *that* bird again
  By dropping salt upon its tail!

OVER THE WATER.

LOOK always on the Surrey side
For true dramatic art.
The road is long—the river wide—
But frequent busses start
From Charing Cross and Gracechurch street,
(An inexpensive ride ;)
So, if you want an evening's treat,
O seek the Surrey side.

I have been there, and still would go,
As Dr Watts observes ;
Although it 's not a place, I know,
For folks with feeble nerves.
Ah me ! how many roars I 've had—
How many tears I 've dried—
At melodramas, good and bad,
Upon the Surrey side.

Can I forget those wicked lords,
  Their voices and their calves ;
The things they did upon those boards,
  And never did by halves :
The peasant, brave though lowly born,
  Who constantly defied
Those wicked lords with utter scorn,
  Upon the Surrey side ?

Can I forget those hearts of oak,
  Those model British tars ;
Who crack'd a skull or crack'd a joke,
  Like true transpontine stars ;
Who hornpip'd *à la* T. P. Cooke,
  And sang—at least they tried—
Until the pit and gallery shook,
  Upon the Surrey side ?

But best of all I recollect
  That maiden in distress—
So unimpeachably correct
  In morals and in dress—

Who, ere the curtain fell, became
  The low-born peasant's bride:
(They nearly always end the same
  Upon the Surrey side.)

I gape in Covent Garden's walls,
  I doze in Drury Lane;
I strive in the Lyceum stalls
  To keep awake—in vain.
There's nought in the dramatic way
  That I can quite abide,
Except the pieces that they play
  Upon the Surrey side.

AN UNAPPRECIATED CRICHTON.

JONES has a party to-night,
But there's no invitation for *me* to it.
People are cutting me quite;
I shall pay a few visits and see to it.
True, I've a thousand a-year,
And am reckon'd the pink of propriety;
As to good-looking, *look here!*
Yet I never get on in Society.

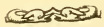
'Tis not as though I were shy,
Or unmanner'd, or not introducible;
Lower-bred people than I
Have triumphantly gone through the crucible.

Many get polish'd in time
  At the cost of a little anxiety ;
What's *my* particular crime
  That I never get on in Society ?

Dance ?—Well, I think I may say
  I 'm as graceful a partner as any one :
Sir, I could caper away
  To a whistle—though simply a penny one.
Sing ?—I could give you a list
  Of enormous extent and variety.
Play ?—Let me show you my wrist ;—
  Yet I never get on in Society.

Hearing me talk is a treat,
  When I take a discourse philosophic up,
During the tea, or repeat
  Little anecdotes over my coffee-cup.
If you 've a passion for puns,
  I could feed you on *them* to satiety—
New and original ones ;
  Yet I never get on in Society.

Two or three glasses of wine
  Give a spur to good-humour and merriment;
So that, wherever I dine,
  I repeat the delightful experiment.
Not that I drink till I lapse
  From the paths of the strictest sobriety;
Still, now and then—why, *perhaps*—
  Yet I never get on in Society!



ONLY SEVEN.

A PASTORAL STORY, AFTER WORDSWORTH.

I MARVELL'D why a simple child,
That lightly draws its breath,
Should utter groans so very wild,
And look as pale as Death.

Adopting a parental tone,
I ask'd her why she cried;
The damsel answer'd, with a groan,
"I've got a pain inside!

"I thought it would have sent me mad
Last night about eleven;"
Said I, "What is it makes you bad?
How many apples have you had?"
She answer'd, "Only seven!"

"And are you sure you took no more,
My little maid?" quoth I.

"Oh ! please, sir, mother gave me four,
But *they* were in a pie !"

"If that's the case," I stammer'd out,
"Of course you've had eleven ;"
The maiden answer'd, with a pout,
"I ain't had more nor seven !"

I wonder'd hugely what she meant,
And said, "I 'm bad at riddles,
But I know where little girls are sent
For telling taradiddles.

"Now, if you don't reform," said I,
"You'll never go to heaven."
But all in vain ; each time I try,
That little idiot makes reply,
"I ain't had more nor seven."

POSTSCRIPT.

To borrow WORDSWORTH'S name was wrong,
Or slightly misapplied ;
And so I 'd better call my song,
"Lines after ACHE-INSIDE."

SEE-SAW.

SICKNESS and Health have been playing
a game with me,
Tossing me up, like a ball, to and fro.
Pleasure and Pain did exactly the same
with me,
Treating me merely like something to
throw.

Joy took me up to the clouds for a holiday
In a balloon that she happens to keep ;
Then, as a damp upon rather a jolly day,
Grief in a diving-bell bore me down deep.

Poverty courted me early—worse luck to her !—
(Wealth would have made me a much better wife ;)
Fool that I am, I was faithful and stuck to her ;
She 'll cling to *me* for the rest of my life.

As for our children, we 'd better have drown'd them all ;
They, I believe, are the worst of our ills.
Is it a wonder I often *confound* them all,
Seeing that most of them chance to be *Bills ?*

Hope, who was once an occasional visitor,
Never drops in on us *now* for a chat.
Memory calls, though,—relentless inquisitor—
(Not that I feel very grateful for *that.*)
Hope was a liar—it 's no use denying it—
Memory's talk is undoubtedly true :
Still, I confess that I like, after trying it,
Hope's conversation the best of the two.

A WILD HUNT.

"Can any one confidently say to himself that he has conversed with the identical individual, stupidest man now extant in London?"—T. CARLYLE.

I STARTED up and slammed the book ;
  I seized my hat and cane ;
I sought the bell and summoned cook
  With all my might and main.
My cook, she is a sober lass—
  Respectable, but slow :
She wonder'd what had come to pass
  To set me ringing so.

Said I, "My skiff is on the shore,
  My bark is on the sea ;
And many suns may set before
  I can return to thee.
Expect me back on Friday week ;
  I 'm not at home till then.
Adieu, adieu ; I go to seek
  The Stupidest of Men !"

I travers'd London in my search,
  Careering to and fro,
From Barnsbury to Brixton Church.
  From Notting Hill to Bow.
"There's no such word as fail," said I:
  "I 'll seek my treasure still
From Brixton Church to Barnsbury,
  From Bow to Notting Hill!"

He went not by the penny-boat,
  The omnibus, or train;
One hour on shore—the next afloat—
  I hunted him in vain.
And ever, as the days wore on
  In travels east and west,
I marvell'd where he *could* have gone,
  My own, my Stupidest.

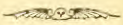
I met, of course, with many men
  Whose brains were very small;
I found a party, now and then,
  With nearly none at all.

I spoke to some who talk'd about
  The weather and the crops;
To others, much the worse, no doubt,
  For alcohol or hops.

Alas! in ev'ry deep, you know,
  There is a deeper yet;
Methought that I had sunk as low
  As I was like to get.
Say, wherefore should I deign to dive
  An atom deeper down?
"My Man," said I, "if still alive,
  Is hiding out of town."

The fret, the fever, and the fuss,
  Were wearing out my brain;
And so at last I hail'd a 'bus
  To take me back again.
At home, securely re-install'd,
  I rang for Mary Ann;
She said a visitor had call'd—
  A "stupid-looking man."

I question'd her, and cook's replies
  Completely prov'd the case.
She said, "I never *did* set eyes
  On such a silly face."
"Thrice welcome, Destiny!" I cried;
  "The moral that you teach:
'Tis thus Man travels far and wide
  For things within his reach!'



A VERY COMMON CHILD.

REFLECTIVE reader, you may go
From Chelsea unto outer Bow,
And back again to Chelsea,
Nor grudge the labour if you meet—
In lane or alley, square or street—
The child whom all the children greet
As Elsie—little Elsie.

A pretty name, a pretty face,
And pretty ways that give a grace
To all she does or utters,
Did Fortune at her birth bestow,
When little Elsie's lot below—
About a dozen years ago—
Got cast among the gutters.

The Fates, you see, have will'd it so
That even folks in Rotten Row
Are not without their trials ;
Whilst only those that know the ways
Of stony London's waifs and strays
Can fancy how the seven days
Pass o'er the Seven Dials.

Suppose an able artizan,
(A model of the "working man"
So written at and lectur'd,)
Amongst the fevers that infest
His temporary fever-nest
Should catch a deadly one—the rest
Is easily conjectur'd.

'Twas hard, on father's death, I think,
That Elsie's mother took to drink ;
('Twas harder yet on baby.)
The reason, reader, *you* may guess,
(*I* cannot find it, I confess)—
Perhaps it was her loneliness ;
Or love of gin, it *may* be.

So there was Elsie, all astray,
And growing bigger day by day,
    But growing none the better.
No other girl (in all the set
That looks on Elsie as a pet)
But knows at least the alphabet,
    And Elsie—not a letter.

Well, reader, I had best be dumb
About the future that may come
    To this forlorn she-urchin.
Her days are brighter ones *pro tem.*,
So let her make the most of them,
Amidst the labyrinths that hem
    Saint Giles's ugly Church in.

CROOKED ANSWERS.

(*Dedicated to the Laureate.*)

No. 1.—Vere de Vere.

THE Lady Clara V. de V.
Presents her very best regards
To that misguided Alfred T.
(With one of her enamell'd cards).
Though uninclin'd to give offence,
The Lady Clara begs to hint
That Master Alfred's common sense
Deserts him utterly in print.

The Lady Clara can but say,
That always from the very first
She snubb'd in her decisive way
The hopes that silly Alfred nurs'd.

The fondest words that ever fell
  From Lady Clara, when they met,
Were "How d'ye do? I hope you're well!"
  Or else "The weather's very wet."

To show a disregard for truth
  By penning scurrilous attacks,
Appears to Lady C. in sooth
  Like stabbing folks behind their backs.
The age of chivalry, she fears,
  Is gone for good, since noble dames
Who irritate low sonneteers
  Get pelted with improper names.

The Lady Clara cannot think
  What kind of pleasure can accrue
From wasting paper, pens, and ink,
  On statements the reverse of true.
If Master Launcelot, one fine day,
  (Urged on by madness or by malt,)
Destroy'd himself—can Alfred say
  The Lady Clara was in fault?

Her Ladyship needs no advice
  How time and money should be spent,
And can't pursue at any price
  The plan that Alfred T. has sent.
She does not in the least object
  To let the "foolish yeoman" go,
But wishes—let him recollect—
  That he should move to Jericho.

No. 2.—MAUD.

NAY, I cannot come into the garden just now,
  Tho' it vexes me much to refuse :
But I *must* have the next set of waltzes, I vow,
  With Lieutenant de Boots of the Blues.

I am sure you 'll be heartily pleas'd when you hear
  That our ball has been quite a success.
As for *me*—I 've been looking a monster, my dear,
  In that old-fashion'd guy of a dress.

You had better at once hurry home, dear, to bed ;
  It is getting so dreadfully late.

You may catch the bronchitis or cold in the head
  If you linger so long at our gate.

Don't be obstinate, Alfy; come, take my advice—
  For I know you're in want of repose.
Take a basin of gruel (you'll find it *so* nice)
  And remember to tallow your nose.

No, I tell you I can't and I shan't get away,
  For De Boots has implor'd me to sing.
As to *you*—if you like it, of course you can stay;
  You were always an obstinate thing.

If you feel it a pleasure to talk to the flow'rs
  About "babble and revel and wine,"
When you might have been snoring for two or three hours,
  Why, it's not the least business of mine.

A BEGGING LETTER.

MY DEAR TOMORROW,
I can think
Of little else to do,
And so I take my pen and ink
To drop a line to you.
I own that I am ill at ease
Respecting you to-day:
Do let me have an anwer, please:
Répondez, s'il vous plait.

I long to like you very much,
But that will all depend
On whether you behave "as such,"
(I mean, dear, as a friend).

I 'll set you quite an easy task
  At which you are *au fait*;
You 'll come and bring me what I ask?
  Répondez, s'il vous plait.

Be sure to recollect your purse,
  For be it understood
Though money-matters might be worse,
  They 're very far from good.
So, if you have a little gold
  You care to give away—
But am I growing over-bold?
  Répondez, s'il vous plait.

A little—just a little—fame
  You must contrive to bring,
Because I think a poet's name
  Would be a pleasant thing
Perhaps, though, as I 've scarcely got
  A single claim to lay
To such a gift, you 'd rather not?
  Répondez, s'il vous plait.

Well, well, Tomorrow, you may strike
  A line through what 's above:
And bring me folks that I can like
  And folks that I can love.
A warmer heart—a quicker brain—
  I 'll ask for, if I may:
Tomorrow, shall I ask in vain?
  Répondez, s'il vous plait.

A COCKNEY'S EVENING SONG.

FADES into twilight the last golden gleam
Thrown by the sunset on upland and stream;
Glints o'er the Serpentine—tips Notting Hill—
Dies on the summit of proud Pentonville.

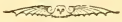
Day brought us trouble, but Night brings us peace;
Morning brought sorrow, but Eve bids it cease.
Gaslight and Gaiety, beam for a while;
Pleasure and Paraffin, lend us a smile.

Temples of Mammon are voiceless again—
Lonely policemen inherit Mark Lane
Silent is Lothbury—quiet Cornhill—
Babel of Commerce, thine echoes are still.

Far to the South—where the wanderer strays
Lost among graveyards and riverward ways,
Hardly a footfall and hardly a breath
Comes to dispute Laurence—Pountney with Death.

Westward the stream of Humanity glides;—
'Busses are proud of their dozen insides.
Put up thy shutters, grim Care, for to-day—
Mirth and the lamplighter hurry this way.

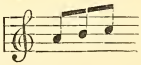
Out on the glimmer weak Hesperus yields!
Gas for the cities and stars for the fields.
Daisies and buttercups, do as ye list;
I and my friends are for music or whist.



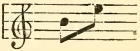
ROMANTIC RECOLLECTIONS.

I.

HEN I lay in a cradle and suck'd a coral,
I lov'd romance in my childish way ;
And stories, with or without a moral,
Were welcome as ever the flow'rs in May.
For love of the false I learnt my spelling,
And brav'd the perils of ——

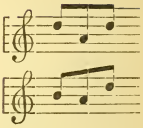


While matters of fact were most repelling,
Romance was pleasant as aught could——



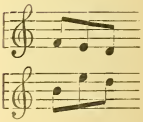
II.

My reading took me to desert islands,
And buried me deep in Arabian Nights;
SIR WALTER led me amongst the Highlands,
Or into the thickest of Moslem fights.
I found the elder DUMAS delightful—
Before the sun had eclips'd the ———
And HARRISON AINSWORTH finely frightful,
And FENIMORE COOPER far from ———



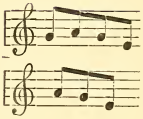
III.

A few years later I took to reading
The morbid stories of EDGAR POE—
Not healthy viands for youthful feeding
(And all my advisers told me so).
But, healthy or not, I enjoy'd them vastly;
My feverish fancy was nightly ———
Upon horrible crimes and murders ghastly
Which sent me terrified off to ———



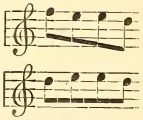
IV.

Well; what with perils upon the prairies,
  And haunted ruins and ghosts in white,
And wars with giants and gifts from fairies,
  At last I came to be craz'd outright.
And many a time, in my nightly slumbers,
  Bearing a glove as a lady's ———
I held the lists against countless numbers,
  After the style of the darkest ———

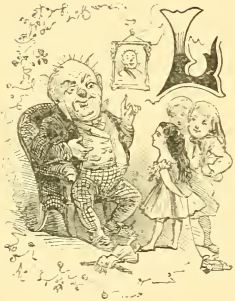


V.

I am chang'd at present; the olden fever
  Has left my brain in a sounder state;
In common-place I 'm a firm believer,
  And hunt for figure and fact and date.
I have lost a lot of my old affection,
  For books on which I was wont to ——
But still I can thrill at the recollection
  Of mystery, magic, and martial ———



THE MAD GRANDPAPA.



LISTEN, little girls and boys;
Listen, one and all!
Put away those nasty toys—
Mary, hold that horrid noise—
Willy, drop your ball!
Come and listen, if you can,
To a bald but good old man.

Charley, if I call you twice,
I shall box your ears!
Grandpapa has something nice
In the shape of good advice
For his little dears:
Simple maxims for the young.
Mary, *will* you hold your tongue?

Folks will teach you when at school—
"Never tell a lie!"
Nonsense: if you're not a fool
You may always break the rule,
But you must be sly;
For they'll whip you, past a doubt,
If they ever find you out.

"Little boys," they say, "should be
Seen but never heard!"
Rubbish: what can people see
In an ugly brat if he
Never says a word?
Talk, then, if you feel inclin'd;
Talking shows the active mind.

Folks will tell you, "Children *must*
Do as they are bid;"
But you understand, I trust,
That the rule is quite unjust
To a thoughtful kid:
For, if once brute force appears,
How about Free-will, my dears?

Folks say, "Children should not let
    Angry passions rise."
Humbug! When you 're in a pet
Why on earth should you regret
    Blacking some one's eyes?
Children's eyes are made, in fact,
Just on purpose to be black'd.

I, when young, was green enough
    Blindly to obey
All the idiotic stuff
That an old pedantic muff
    Taught me day by day;—
And, you see—at eighty-five
I 'm the biggest fool alive!

SHABBY-GENTEEL.

WHEN I last had the pleasure—one day in the City—
Of seeing poor Brown, I was forcibly struck
By his alter'd appearance, and thought, What a pity
To see the old fellow so down on his luck.
From the crown of a hat that was horribly seedy
To shoes that were dreadfully down at the heel
He suggested a type of the poor and the needy—
A sketch at full length of the shabby-genteel.

There were holes in his gloves—his umbrella was cotton—
His coat was a faded invisible green ;
And in prominent bulbs, through the trowsers he 'd got on,
The marks of his knees, or *patellæ*, were seen.
But it seem'd above all inexpressibly painful
To notice the efforts he made to conceal—
By a tone partly nervous and partly disdainful—
The fact of his looking so shabby-genteel.

"How is business?" I ask'd him;—"and what are you doing?"
  To tell you the truth I decidedly had
A belief that the trade he had last been pursuing
  (Whatever its nature) had gone to the bad.
His reply was a sigh:—it was little good urging
  The questions afresh, for I could not but feel
That he saw not a prospect of ever emerging
  Above the dead-level of shabby-genteel.

When we parted I sunk into gloomy reflection—
  A state of the mind that I hate, by the way—
And I gave my Brown-studies a moral direction—
  Though, put into poetry, morals don't pay.
Here's the truth I evolved, if I quite recollect it:
  Fraîl Fortune one day, by a turn of the wheel,
May despatch you or me, sir, when least we expect it,
  To march in the ranks of the shabby-genteel.

CUPID'S MAMMA.

HE waits with Cupid at the wing—
The transformation is approaching ;—
She gives the god, poor little thing,
Some final hints by way of "coaching."
For soon the merry motley clown—
Most purely practical of jokers—
Will bring the pit and gallery down
With petty larcenies and pokers.

No Venus—anything but *that.*
Could Fancy, howsoever flighty,

Transform the mother of this brat
  To aught resembling Aphrodite ?
No Venus, but the daily sport
  Of common cares and vulgar trials ;
No monarch of a Paphian court—
  Her court is in the Seven Dials.

She taught young Love to play the part—
  To bend the bow and aim the arrows
Those arms will never pierce a heart
  Unless it be a Cockney sparrow's.
Alas, the Truthful never wooed
  The Beautiful to fashion Cupid :
But, in some sympathetic mood,
  Perhaps the Ugly wooed the Stupid.

Is Cupid nervous ? Not a bit ;
  Love seeks no mortal approbation.
Stalls, boxes, gallery, and pit
  May hiss or cheer the transformation.
Mamma looks anxious and afraid
  While parting with her young beginner,
Whose little wages, weekly paid,
  Will pay her for a weekly dinner.

THE CRUSADER'S FAREWELL.

WHEN KING DICK the lion-hearted, pack'd his luggage up and started,
(*Vide* HUME and SMOLLETT *passim*) for a trip to Palestine,
Tall young men, though half unwilling to accept the offer'd shilling,
Left their wives and little children, and enlisted in the line.

Wot ye well that there was grieving when those tall young men were leaving;
Wot ye well that there was business being done in locks of hair;
Wot ye well that rings were broken, and presented as a token,
By the noblest of the noble to the fairest of the fair.

Said a soldier, on the shady side of forty, to a lady
Who was buckling on his burgonet, his breastplate, and his brand;
"By my halidom, I 'd rather, as a husband and a father,
Stop at home than go crusading in that blessed Holy Land."

"Yes, I know as well as *you*, dear, it's the proper thing to do,
dear;
And I'm not afraid of fighting, (as I think I said before;)
But it's not without emotion that I contemplate the notion
Of a trip across the channel in a British man-of-war.

"No, it's not at all a question of alarm, but indigestion;
Not the lances of the Paynim, but the passage in the gale,
When the awful cry of 'Steward' from the windward and the
leeward,
From a hundred lips arises, when a hundred lips are pale!"

"Yes, I know you're very sickly," said his lady, rather quickly;
But you'll take a cup of sherris or a little Malvoisie,
When you get as far as Dover;—and when once you're half-
seas over,
Why you'll find yourself as jolly as you possibly can be."

So her lord and master started, just a trifle chicken-hearted,
And, it may be, just a trifle discontented with his lot;
But whether he got sick, or felt the better for the liquor
That his lady recommended, this deponent sayeth not.

LAYS OF MANY LANDS.

No 1. Cossimbazar.

COME fleetly, come fleetly, my hookabadar,
For the sound of the tam-tam is heard from afar.
"Banoolah! Banoolah!" The Brahmins are nigh,
And the depths of the jungle re-echo their cry.
Pestonjee Bomanjee!
Smite the guitar;
Join in the chorus, my hookabadar.

Heed not the blast of the deadly monsoon,
Nor the blue Brahmaputra that gleams in the moon.

Stick to thy music, and oh! let the sound
Be heard with distinctness a mile or two round.
Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy!
Sweep the guitar.
Join in the chorus, my hookabadar.

Art thou a Buddhist, or dost thou indeed
Put faith in the monstrous Mohammedan creed?
Art thou a Ghebir—a blinded Parsee?
Not that it matters an atom to me.
Cursetjee Bomanjee!
Twang the guitar.
Join in the chorus, my hookabadar.

No. 2. Saragossa.

PEPITA, my paragon, bright star of Arragon ;
Listen, dear, listen ; your Cristobal sings.
From my cot that lies buried a short way from Lerida
Love and a *diligence* lent me their wings.
Swift as a falcon I flew to thy balcony.
(Is it bronchitis ? I can't sing a bar.)
Greet not with merriment Love's first experiment ;
Listen, Pepita ! I 've brought my *catarrh*.

Manuel the matador may, like a flat, adore
Donna Dolores · I pity his choice,
For they say that her governor lets neither lover nor
Any one else hear the sound of her voice.
Brother Bartolomé (stoutish Apollo) may
Sigh for Sabina—you 'll pardon this cough ?—
And Isabel's votary, Nunez the notary,
Vainly—(That sneeze again ? Loved one, I 'm off !)

No. 3. Clarens.

TAKE Leman wooes me with its crystal face—
(That observation is the late Lord Byron's)
And Chillon seems a damp unpleasant place—
(Where Bonnivard, poor soul, got clapt in irons.)
Beside me Vevey lies, romantic town,
(I wish the weather were not quite so damp,)
And, not far distant, Alpine summits frown—
(Ah, just what I expected. That 's the cramp !)

Before the blast are driven the flying clouds—
(And I should like to blow a cloud as well)
The vapours wrap the mountain-tops in shrouds—
(I left my mild cheroots at the hotel.)
Dotting the glassy surface of the stream,
(Oh, here 's a cigarette—my mind 's at ease,)
The boats move silently as in a dream—
(Confound it! where on earth are my fusees?)

Methinks in such a Paradise as this,
(Thank goodness, there 's a clodhopper in sight.)
To live were ecstasy, to die were bliss.
(Could you oblige me, Monsieur, with a light?)
I could live pure beneath so pure a sky—
(The rain 's completely spoilt my Sunday coat,)
And sink into the tomb without a sigh—
(There 's the bell ringing for the *table d'hôte.*)

No. 4. Venice.

SPEED, gondolier, speed, o'er the lonely lagoon,
To the distant piazetta
Where dwells my Minetta,
Lest envious Aurora surprise us too soon.

Sing, gondolier, sing, with a heart full as mine—
Though thy larynx be wheezy
And singing 's not easy
Whilst guiding a vessel so tub-like as thine.

Cease, gondolier, cease ; 'twas an exquisite air—
But we've reach'd the Rialto,
So hand me that paletôt ;
And tell me, my gondolier, what is thy fare ?

THE SEASONS.

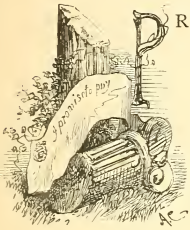
THE smiling Spring is too light a thing—
Too much of a child for me.
No trace in her face of the ripen'd grace
That a lover would love to see.
Hers are the showers—but half the flowers
Hang back for her sister's call.
Amongst the seasons, for divers reasons,
The Spring is the worst of all.

I dread the Summer, the next new-comer,
Because of her changeful forms:
She merits my praise for her cloudless days,
But my wrath for her fearful storms.
There are flames in her love from the fires above,
And her kisses like lava fall.
Amongst the seasons, for various reasons,
The Summer is worst of all.

The Autumn drear glides into a year
  With the moan of an injured ghost.
Then shiver and fall the brown leaves all,
  And the woods are in rags almost.
She comes and flings on blossoming things
  A shadow of shroud and pall.
Amongst the seasons, for several reasons,
  The Autumn is worst of all.

The Winter is good, be it understood,
  For scarcely a single thing:
Although it is prime at the Christmas time
  To revel and dance and sing.
It is full of such ills as tradesmen's bills.
  And its pleasures are scant and small.
Amongst the seasons, for many good reasons,
  The Winter is worst of all.

BROKEN VOWS.



PROMISES are lightly spoken ;
Vows on which we blindly build
(Utter'd only to be broken)
Go for ever unfulfill'd.
Oft betray'd, but still believing—
Duped again and yet again—
All our hoping, all our grieving
Warns us, but it warns in vain.

From the cradle and the coral—
From the sunny days of youth—
We are taught a simple moral,
Still we doubt the moral's truth.
When a boy they found me rather
Loth to do as I was bid.
"I shall buy a birch," said father—
Broken vows! He never *did*.

Grown extravagant, when youthful,
In my tailor's debt I ran ;

He appear'd about as truthful
  In his talk as *any* man.
Let me tell you how he sold me:
  "Look you, Mr What 's-Your-Name,
I shall summons *you*," he told me—
  But the summons *never came!*

Through the meadows, daisy-laden,
  Once it was my lot to stray,
Talking to a lovely maiden
  In a very loving way;
And I stole a kiss—another—
  Then another—then a lot.
"Fie!" she said, "I 'll tell my mother."
  Idle words; she told her not.

When a party who dislikes me
  Promises to "punch my head,"
'Tis an empty phrase, it strikes me,
  They are words too lightly said.
Not since Disappointment school'd me,
  Have I credited the truth
Of the promises that fool'd me
  In my green and gushing youth.

WHERE—AND OH! WHERE?

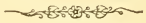
WHERE are the times when—miles away
From the din and the dust of cities—
Alexis left his lambs to play,
And wooed some shepherdess half the day
With pretty and plaintive ditties?

Where are the pastures daisy-strewn
And the flocks that lived in clover;
The Zephyrs that caught the pastoral tune
And carried away the notes as soon
As ever the notes were over?

Where are the echoes that bore the strains
Each to his nearest neighbour:

And all the valleys and all the plains
Where all the nymphs and their love-sick swains
  Made merry to pipe and tabor?

Where are they gone? They are gone to sleep
  Where Fancy alone can find them:
But Arcady's times are like the sheep
That quitted the care of Little Bo-Peep,
  For they've left their tales behind them!



A FIT OF THE BLUES.

MY deep cerulean eyes are full of tears,
And bluely burns my melancholy taper:
How dimly every azure line appears
To be imprinted on my bluish paper.

My casement opens on the blue, blue sky,
The cobalt of the dawn already lightens
The outer east—and yet small joy have I,
That Luna fades and that Aurora brightens.

Oh that the morning light could bring for me
One hour amidst the blue-bells and the heather!—
One hour of sojourn on the wide blue sea,
In crystal calmness or in stormy weather!

Oh that the "freshness of the heart" could fall
  Once more upon my spirit, and could kindly
Bring back again the days when first of all
  I read my *Blue Beard* and believed it blindly !

One cure there is for all the ills that make
  Existence duller than a blue-book's pages :—
A strong blue-pill is just the thing to take
  For indigestion in the early stages.

ROTTEN ROW.

THERE'S a tempting bit of greenery—of *rus in urbe* scenery—
That 's haunted by the London "upper ten;"
Where, by exercise on horseback, an equestrian may force back
Little fits of *tedium vitæ* now and then.

Oh! the times that I have been there, and the types that I have seen there
Of that gorgeous Cockney animal, the "swell;"
And the scores of pretty riders (both patricians and outsiders)
Are considerably more than I can tell.

When first the warmer weather brought these people all together,
And the crowds began to thicken through the Row,
I reclined against the railing on a sunny day, inhaling
All the spirits that the breezes could bestow.

And the riders and the walkers and the thinkers and the talkers
  Left me lonely in the thickest of the throng,
Not a touch upon my shoulder—not a nod from one beholder—
  As the stream of Art and Nature went along.

But I brought away one image, from that fashionable scrimmage,
  Of a figure and a face—ah, *such* a face!
Love has photograph'd the features of that loveliest of creatures
  On my memory, as Love alone can trace.

Did I hate the little dandy in the whiskers, (they were sandy,)
  Whose absurd salute was honour'd by a smile?
Did I marvel at his rudeness in presuming on her goodness,
  When she evidently loathed him all the while?

Oh the hours that I have wasted, the regrets that I have tasted,
  Since the day (it seems a century ago)
When my heart was won *instanter* by a lady in a canter,
  On a certain sunny day in Rotten Row!

A LAST RESOURCE.

LONE on India's burning plain,
Beneath a banyan tree,
A mortal many hours had lain
In ceaseless agony.
Mosquitoes with a constant buzz
Came flocking round their prize:
(It varies—the mosquito does—
In appetite and size.)

But, though it varies as to form,
And varies as to thirst,
In Asia, (where the nights are warm,)
The small ones are the worst.

Anon their victim waved his arm
  To scare them from their feed;
But found, alas! that their alarm
  Was very brief indeed.

Then other remedies he sought,
  But still he sought in vain;
Until a wild and witching thought
  Came flashing through his brain.
At once he started bolt upright
  Against the banyan tree,
And, in the silence of the night,
  "Now, listen all!" said he.

"I 've had enough of these attacks—
  Enough and rather more!"
(His voice had now begun to wax
  Much louder than before.
The hearers trembled, one and all;
  Dead stillness reign'd around:
You might have heard a needle fall
  The hush was so profound.)

"When I was living far away—
  Across the briny deep—
I laid me down one summer day
  To try to go to sleep;
When, lo! as I began to see
  A prospect of repose,
There straightway came a humble-bee
  Who buzz'd about my nose.

"I ever was a patient man;
  I take a certain pride
In suffering as best I can
  Whatever ills betide.
But this was *not* a thing to bear;
  So rising in my wrath,
I slew the monster then and there
  Upon the table-cloth.

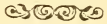
"The moral of my tale, methinks,
  'Tis needless to declare.
I wish to take my forty winks:
  Disturb me if ye dare.

The first who interferes with *me*
  Imperils life and limb;
For as I did unto the bee
  I mean to do to *him!*"

Again he glanced upon the crew,
  And laid him down to rest.
Irresolute and pallid grew
  Their bravest and their best.

* * * *

Next morning when the sunlight gleam'd
  Upon the earth and sea,
That unmolested youth still dream'd
  About the humble-bee.



WEATHERBOUND IN THE SUBURBS.

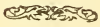
THE air is damp, the skies are leaden;
The ominous lull of impending rain
Presses upon me, and seems to deaden
Every sense but a sense of pain.

Hopes of getting again to London
Lapse into utter and grim despair;
Shall I do my verses or leave them *un*done?
I don't know, and I don't much care.

I sit in a silence broken only
Now and again by the wandering breeze,
A breeze in the garden, wandering lonely,
Or playing the fool with shivering trees.

I have slept all night—should I call it sleeping?—
  Out of all sound but the pattering drops
Against the pane, and the wild wind keeping
  Revelry up in the chimney-tops.

I want the hum of my working brothers—
  London bustle and London strife—
To count as one in three million others;—
  How can I *live* away from life?



MIDAS.

N Lemprière—bewitching book—
I've read and read the story olden,
Which tells us of the king who took
That fatal fancy to the golden.
The monarch, by a simple touch,
Transmuted anything *instanter.*
(Since then the times have alter'd much,
And only Tempora mutantur.)

His palace roof was raised on high
By pillars bright with golden glory ;—
(No modern publisher could buy
One column of this classic story.)

His pamper'd pages quite cut out
  The pages from the "Wealth of Nations:"
They had gilt edges, past a doubt,
  And lots of *Doré* illustrations.

But Midas very soon, they say,
  Knelt down and—driven to distraction—
Implored the gods to take away
  Their awful gift of aurifaction.
'Twas hunger that induced remorse;
  The king was at the point of starving.
(For gilding had become, of course,
  The instant consequence of carving.)

Do all I will, I cannot bring
  My faith to credit such a fable;
Although a *cheque 's* a common thing
  To turn to gold when one is áble.
But gold, as far as I can learn,
  (And here the story seems a "whopper!")
Gets changed to silver in its turn,
  And silver in its turn to copper.

TO A TIMID LEECH.

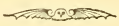
NAY, start not from the banquet where the red wine foams
for thee—
Though somewhat thick to perforate this *epidermis* be;
'Tis madness, when the bowl invites, to linger at the brink;
So haste thee, haste thee, timid one. Drink, pretty creature,
drink!

I tell thee, if these azure veins could boast the regal wine
Of Tudors or Plantagenets, the draught should still be thine!
Though round the goblet's beaded brim plebeian bubbles wink,
'Twill cheer and not inebriate. Drink, pretty creature, drink!

Perchance, reluctant being, I have placed thee wrong side up,
And the lips that I am chiding have been farthest from the cup.

I have waited long and vainly, and I cannot, cannot think
Thou wouldst spurn the oft-repeated call: Drink, pretty creature, drink!

While I watch'd thy patient struggles, and imagined thou wert coy,
'Twas thy tail, and not thy features, that refused the proffer'd joy.
I will but turn thee tenderly—nay, never, never shrink—
Now, once again the banquet calls: Drink, pretty creature drink!



ANACREONTIC.

(For a Cavalier Tea-Party.)

Y, marry! With glee I abandon the bottle;
But, mark me, not all your philosophers, up
From quaint Master Mill to antique Aristotle,
Shall make me turn tail on the saucer and cup.
Drink, roysterers all; and, ifegs! while I utter
The praises of tea, let the burden resound.
Let those who prefer it have plain bread and butter;
For *me*, lads, I warrant the *toast* shall go round.

Chorus.—Let those, &c.

Dull knaves who delight in the worship of BACCHUS
  May jeer at our joys in their pestilent way.
Pert fools that love Sherris perchance may attack us;
  What boots it, my bully boys? Drink and be gay.
Adzooks, let the braggarts go sleep in the gutter;
  Carouse ye, so long as Bohea can be found;
Let those who prefer it have plain bread and butter;
  For *me*, lads, I warrant the *toast* shall go round.
Chorus.—Let those, &c.

Odsbodikins! Tea is the soul and the sinew
  Of all the gay gallants that fight for the king;
Long, long on the throne may our monarch continue,
  To laugh at the French and bid rebels go swing.
Drink, drink to our flag, boys; for ages shall flutter
  In glory and honour that standard renown'd.
Let those who prefer it have plain bread and butter;
  For *me*, lads, I warrant the *toast* shall go round.
Chorus.—Let those, &c.

A CHILD'S TWILIGHT.

CHILD.

THE sun drops down in the deep, deep west
As a ball sinks into a cup ;
And the moon springs rapidly up from rest
As a Jack-in-the-box leaps up.

Now falls the shadow and comes the dark,
And the face of the world is hid ;
Like the men and the beasts in a Noah's ark
When they slumber beneath its lid.

So softly—slowly—the silence creeps
Over earth and all earthly things,
That it leaves Mankind like a doll that sleeps
With nothing to touch the springs.

MOTHER.

Ah! would that never the stars might shine—
  Like Heaven's kaleidoscopes—
Upon lids less innocent, love, than thine
  Less innocent joys and hopes.

THE HOUSE ON THE TOP OF A HILL.

A Newgate Ballad.

THERE'S a structure whose battlements gloomily frown
From the brow of a mountainous height;
And the people go up and the people go down
By that mansion from dawn until night.
I viewed it with terror in infancy's days,
I've a latent respect for it still;
Many sentiments thrill me whenever I gaze
At the House on the Top of a Hill.

Permission to enter that fortress I find
Can be got from a judge now and then,

Through a letter of recommendation that 's sign'd
By a dozen respectable men.
You have merely to put a friend out of the way,
Or abstract the contents of his till,
To make yourself heartily welcome, they say,
At the House on the Top of a Hill.

There is lodging and board for the destitute poor,
With a diet nutritious though cheap ;
And at evening they kindly make sure of your door,
Just in case you should walk in your sleep.
There 's a medical man to attend on the guests,
And a chaplain who strives to instil
The most laudable sentiments into their breasts
At the House on the Top of a Hill.

Ev'ry guest has a private apartment ;—in fact,
It 's a kind of luxurious hotel,
Where a man who commits any praiseworthy act
Can be treated remarkably well.
Nay ; it 's better than many hotels you can find,
For they never present any bill ;
But they patch you up *gratis* in body and mind
At the House on the Top of a Hill.

MEN I DISLIKE.

OF all the bores whom now and then
Society permits
To speak to literary men,
And mix among the wits,
The worst are those that *will* devote
Their little minds to anecdote.

I often listen (more or less)
To muffs of many kinds—
Including people who possess
Encyclopædic minds:
But oh! the biggest muff afloat
Is he who takes to anecdote.

I like the man who makes a pun,
    Or drops a deep remark;
I like philosophy or fun—
    A lecture or a lark;
But I despise the men who gloat
Inanely over anecdote.

I quake when some one recollects
    A "little thing" he heard,
And, while he tells the tale, expects
    A grin at every word.
Can any one on earth promote
Good fellowship through anecdote?

Ah me! I'd rather live alone
    Upon a desert isle,
Without a voice except my own
    To cheer me all the while,
Than dwell with men who learn by rote
Their paltry funds of anecdote!

NOT QUITE FAIR.

SUMMER and spring the lovely rose,
Unconscious of its beauty, blows—
Condemn'd, in summer and in spring,
To feel no pride at blossoming.

The hills, the meadows, and the lakes,
Enchant not for their own sweet sakes:
They cannot know, they cannot *care*
To know, that they are thought so fair.

The rainbow, sunset, cloud, and star,
Dream not how exquisite they are.
All dainty things of earth and sky
Delight us—but they know not why.

But I—a poet—who possess
The power of loving loveliness,
May ask, (and I may ask in vain,)
"Why *am* I so intensely plain?"

WISDOM AND WATER.

FIELDS are green in the early light,
When Morning treads on the skirts of Night:
Fields are gray when the sun 's gone west,
Like a clerk from the City in search of rest.
"Flesh," they tell us, "is only grass;"
And that is the reason it comes to pass
That mortals change in a life's long day
From the young and green to the old and gray.

Not long since—as it seems to me—
I was as youthful as youth could be:
Cramming my noddle, as young folks do,
With a thousand things more nice than true.

Now this noddle of mine looks strange,
With its plenty of silver—and no small change !—
Surely I came the swiftest way
From the young and green to the old and gray.

Though the day be a changeful thing
In winter and summer, autumn and spring ;
Days in December and days in June
Both seem finish'd a deal too soon.
Twilight shadows come closing in,
And the calmest, placidest hours begin :
The closing scenes of the piece we play
From the young and green to the old and gray.

'TWAS EVER THUS.

I NEVER rear'd a young gazelle,
(Because, you see, I never tried ;)
But, had it known and loved me well,
No doubt the creature would have died.
My rich and aged uncle JOHN
Has known me long and loves me well,
But still persists in living on—
I would he were a young gazelle.

I never loved a tree or flower ;
But, if I *had*, I beg to say,
The blight, the wind, the sun, or shower,
Would soon have wither'd it away.
I 've dearly loved my uncle JOHN,
From childhood till the present hour,
And yet he *will* go living on—
I would he were a tree or flower !

MY SONG.

I LEARNT a simple bit of rhyme—
An easy air to sing;—
I thought the ditty at the time
A rather funny thing.
Of course, as I was green and young,
My judgment might be wrong;
Still, folks applauded when I sung
My only comic song.

'Twas all about a Cavalier
Who finds a pair of gloves,
Which implicate, it's very clear,
The lady whom he loves.
That knight incontinently sends
That lady to Hong-Kong—
And thereupon abruptly ends
My only comic song.

'Twas most successful in its way,
  For I could understand
Enough of harmony to play
  Upon a Collard's grand.
My voice (though never very sweet,
  And never very strong)
Possess'd sufficient force to treat
  My only comic song.

One evening, anxious to impress
  The lady of my choice,
I took some pains about my dress
  And more about my voice.
But lo ! a miserable man
  (My rival all along)
Stept in before me, and began
  My only comic song.

BOW BELLS.

AT the brink of a murmuring brook
A contemplative Cockney reclined;
And his face wore a sad sort of look,
As if care were at work on his mind.
He sigh'd now and then as we sigh
When the heart with soft sentiment swells;
And a tear came and moisten'd each eye
As he mournfully thought of Bow Bells.

I am monarch of all I survey!
(Thus he vented his feelings in words)—
But my kingdom, it grieves me to say,
Is inhabited chiefly by birds.

In this brook that flows lazily by
  I believe that *one* tittlebat dwells,
For I saw something jump at a fly
  As I lay here and long'd for Bow Bells.

Yonder cattle are grazing—it 's clear
  From the bob of their heads up and down;—
But I cannot love cattle down here
  As I should if I met them in town.
Poets say that each pastoral breeze
  Bears a melody laden with spells;
But I don't find the music in these
  That I find in the tone of Bow Bells.

I am partial to trees, as a rule;
  And the rose is a beautiful flower.
(Yes, I once read a ballad at school
  Of a rose that was wash'd in a shower.)
But, although I may doat on the rose,
  I can scarcely believe that it smells
Quite so sweet in the bed where it grows
  As when sold within sound of Bow Bells.

No ; I 've tried it in vain once or twice,
  And I 've thoroughly made up my mind
That the country is all very nice—
  But I 'd much rather mix with my kind.
Yes ; to-day—if I meet with a train—
  I will fly from these hills and these dells ;
And to-night I will sleep once again
  (Happy thought !) within sound of Bow Bells.

THE PLOT OF A ROMANCE.

AY! there they stood on the self-same spot,
And, it might be, the self-same day;
But one was thinking and one was not,
In exactly the old, old way.

Let the proud Earl feast in his gilded halls,
But the sound of a maniac's curse
Rings ever and aye round the castle-walls
That shelter the grim Fitz-Urse.

For the gory head of a patriot sire
Shall smile on a long-lost son,
Ere an island home shall be girt with fire,
And a victory lost and won.

There's an empty chair in the ingle-nook,
  And a trivet against the wall ;
There's a ghastly stain in the Domesday book,
  And a mystery shroudeth all.

Old Peter the Beadsman breathes a sigh
  As he passes the churchyard lone,
Where the bones of the best and the bravest lie,
  All under a milk-white stone.

But winter and summer there lies a blot
  On the scutcheon of grim Fitz-Urse ;
And the two stood there, on the self-same spot,
  As I said in the opening verse.

THE SUBJECTS OF SONG.

MULETEER! my Muleteer!
you haunt me in my slumber!
Through ballads (oh, so many!)
and through songs (oh, such
a number!):
You scale the Guadarrama—
you infest the Pyrenees,
And trot through comic operas
in four and twenty keys.
I hum of you, and whistle too;
I vainly try to banish
The million airs that you pervade in English, French, and
Spanish.
I hold your dark Pepitas and your mules immensely dear,
But *you* begin to bore me, O eternal Muleteer!

O Gondolier ! my Gondolier ! pray quit the Adriatic ;
That cold lagoon will make me soon incurably asthmatic.
Enough of barcarolling when the moon is in the skies ;
I 'm sick of the Rialto and I hate the Bridge of Sighs.
Your craft may suit, on summer nights, the songster or the dreamer ;
But, both for speed and elegance, give *me* the penny steamer.
Your city is romantic, but your songs begin, I fear,
To pall upon me sadly, O eternal Gondolier !

O Cavalier ! my Cavalier ! for ages and for ages
You 've glared upon me darkly out of scores of title-pages :
I 've join'd in all your battles, in your banquets, and your loves
(Including one occasion when you found a pair of gloves :)
I 've seen you kiss and ride away—most cowardly behaviour !
But then, to damsels in distress I've seen you act the saviour.
You 're vastly entertaining ; but I fancy that I hear
A deal too much about you, O eternal Cavalier !

AN OLD CYNIC.

IS CUPID quite the rosy god
That poets try to make him out?
I 've known him two-score years and odd,
And, frankly, I begin to doubt.
He has his prizes, I have heard;
I *know* he has his blanks as well:
In fact, I think, upon my word,
Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle!

Is PLUTUS quite the hero-king
That money-worms would have us think?
And is there, truly, anything
Of music in the metal's clink?

Perhaps you have a heart and brain,
  And have a heart and brain *to sell!*
If not—I think 'tis pretty plain
  Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle!

Is BACCHUS quite the handsome rake—
  The gay and fascinating youth—
That poets paint him when they take
  Poetic licences with truth?
When fever'd pulses come with day,
  And headaches at your breakfast-bell,
I rather fancy that you 'll say,
  Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle!

And is APOLLO quite so kind
  As people say, to all his sons?
I think that now and then you 'll find
  He rather starves his younger ones.
To play the lyre is pretty hard;
  It 's harder still to play it well.
Depend upon it, brother bard,
  Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle!

Of course you can afford to burn
  A rushlight, if the stakes be large ;
(And when you look for some return
  In money for your rushlight's charge.)
But will you lose or will you gain ?
  That 's somewhat difficult to tell ;
And, if you *lose*, it 's very plain
  Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle !

THE NIGHTINGALE.

T was the love-lorn PHILOMEL—
The sweetest bird that sings ;
And o'er my spirit came the spell
That all sad music flings.
Then—fashioning to tender words
That wordless fairy-tale—
" Sing on," I cried, " oh, bird of birds,
Melodious Nightingale !"

Her sorrow pierced me through and through ;
And, though the village-chime
A while ago had stricken two,
I took no note of time.

But somehow, ere the clock told three,
  I felt my ardour fail;
For sleep came fighting hard in me
  Against the Nightingale.

An hour I lay and listen'd still
  To that ecstatic voice,
(Not working out my own sweet will,
  But Mr HOBSON'S choice.)
"This melancholy strain," said I,
  "Is very like a wail!"
Eftsoons I raised a bitter cry
  Of "Hang the Nightingale!"

The village-clock had sped its round,
  The village-clock struck five,
And still I found my sense of sound
  Remorselessly alive.
I knew my efforts at repose
  Would be of small avail,
Unless I rose and donn'd my hose,
  And slew the Nightingale.

No way but one. I had a gun
  With which, in former years,
Great execution I had done
  Amongst the Volunteers ;
And, while a friendly moonbeam came
  And lighted hill and dale,
I loaded—took a deadly aim—
  And—*exit* Nightingale !

TO MY BRAIN.

(A LAST APPEAL.)

I.

REFRACTORY again,
My little—not exactly busy—B?
Well, *you're* a beauty, any one can see,
To call yourself a brain!

II.

I've tried repeated raps,
As Mr HOME and other media do;
But there's no getting spirits out of *you*;—
You're out of *them*, perhaps?

III.

It's not an easy thing
To grow poetic on a winter night,
So come along and let us take a flight
For the Pierian Spring.

WANTED, A SINGER.

OH ! sing me a song of the wild, wide sea,
Of the peril of rocks and storms—
How mariners bold as bold can be
Face Death in a hundred forms
Methinks—whenever I hear you sing—
That I rather should relish that kind
of thing.

Nay, fashion the verse to a knightly
strain,
And sing of some warlike band ;
Of chivalry seeking a battle-plain
And perishing sword in hand.
I feel—whenever I hear you sing—
So decided a taste for that kind of thing.

But can you not carol a heart-felt lay,
  On the pleasures and pains of love—
A melody soft as a breeze in May,
  And pure as the skies above?
I think—whenever I hear you sing—
That there *may* be a charm in that kind of thing.

Come, chirrup me gaily a drinking-stave,
  Of the bowl and its deep delights—
A hymn to old BACCHUS, the god that gave
  Such mirth to our festive nights.
But stop—why trouble yourself to sing,
As I *know* I am good at that kind of thing?

ANTICIPATIONS.

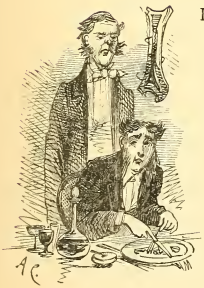
I AM thirty to-day, and my health
  Will be drunk at our family party,
Where prophecies touching my wealth
  And my fame will be fluent and hearty.
Then Fancy, excited by themes
  That are born of the wine and the dinner,
May bring back belief in the dreams
  That I dream'd as a hopeful beginner.

Ah ! my ballads, my songs, how I 've yearn'd
  For the time to collect you and edit
A book that perhaps would have earn'd,
  Not a name, but a *quantum* of credit.
I 'd christen it " Sweets for the Sweet,"
  Or " The Lyrics and Lays of a Lover ;
And *Simmonds's Poems Complete,*
  Should be printed in gold on the cover.

I have long'd for the pleasures that gold
  Can procure—and I freely confess it:
(For avarice grows, we are told,
  As the *ipsa pecunia crescit.*)
If I had but a fortune—oh, *then*
  I could finish my course pretty gaily,
With lots of the cleverest men
  In my circle to dine with me daily.

I should give up my bachelor life
  When I met with a girl to adore me:
With riches and fame and a wife,
  What a path would be open before me!
My bliss would be trebly secure,
  And my future unclouded and sunny.
She'd love me for love, I am sure:
  And, if *not*, she could love me for money!

THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES.



I HAVE a friend in Eaton Place—
A very wealthy man—
Whose house is one I love to grace
As often as I can.
His meats are always of the best,
His wines are rich and rare;
A footman, elegantly drest,
Keeps watch behind my chair.

I like the meats—I love the wine—
(For, give me leave to say,
'Tis very seldom that I dine
In that expensive way.)

But what is gold and silver plate,
  And what is dainty fare?
They cannot make me tolerate
  The man behind my chair.

Perchance I venture on a pun,
  A quip, or else a crank;
Amongst my auditors is one
  Whose face remains a blank.
I hear the table in a roar,
  Loud laughter fills the air;
But no—it simply seems to bore
  The man behind my chair.

I talk about my Lady This,
  Or else my Lady That;
Sometimes an Honourable Miss
  Comes in extremely pat.
I quote the Earl of So-and-So,
  Of Such-and-Such a square;
But, socially, I feel below
  The man behind my chair.

Upon the summit of my crown
  I have a trifling patch :
A little white amidst the brown,
  An opening in the thatch.
From all my fellow-men but one
  I hide my loss of hair :
He sees it though ; I cannot shun
  The man behind my chair.

Some day, should Fortune only smile
  Upon my low estate,
I mean to feed in such a style
  As few can emulate.
Should ever such a lot be mine,
  I solemnly declare
That I will banish, when I dine,
  The man behind my chair.

THE OLD WAG.

AIR—"*Gee, ho, Dobbin!*"

I ACHIEVED my success, as a young diner-out,
Through my great conversational talents, no doubt;
For of humour and wit I was blest with a store,
And I kept the whole table, by JOVE, in a roar
With my waggery, ah!
My waggery, oh!
How the company grinn'd at my waggery, oh!

You could never extort a remark out of *me*
Which was not overflowing with quaint repartee.
And, when people thought proper to cavil or carp
At a notion of *mine*—I was down on them sharp

With my waggery, ah !
My waggery, oh !
For I crush'd them at once with my waggery, oh !

Among persons of genius the tone that I took
Was a mixture of JERROLD and THEODORE HOOK.
And a great fund of anecdote, varied in style,
I employ'd among duffers to get up a smile
At my waggery, ah !
My waggery, oh !
There was often a yell at my waggery, oh !

But those days of delight are for ever gone by,
And I can't get a meal by my wit, if I try,
For care and old age, I am sorry to say,
Have destroy'd my high spirits, and bolted away
With my waggery, ah !
My waggery, oh !
I shall never see more of my waggery, oh !

ETIQUETTE.

A MONTH ago I bought a book,
Brimful of good advice,
('Twas labell'd sixpence, but they took
A somewhat smaller price.)
The cover carried signs of age,
But ne'er can I forget
The name upon the title-page—
'Twas "Hints on Etiquette."

You can't conceive the change of tone
That volume wrought in me;
Or what an alter'd man I've grown,
From what I used to be.

This mark'd improvement in my ways
  Compels me to regret
I never heard in earlier days
  Of "Hints on Etiquette."

'Tis true I cling to Bass's pale,
  But I redeem the fault,
By asking for "a glass of ale,"
  Not "half a pint of malt."
Of old the pewter pot conferr'd
  A zest on "heavy wet;"
But that was long before I heard
  Of "Hints on Etiquette."

When dining out, in early life,
  I often used to stoop
To taking peas up with my knife,
  And asking twice for soup.
I 'm fast improving, though I doubt
  If I am perfect yet
In all the feeding-laws set out
  In "Hints on Etiquette."

I don for evening parties now
  The whitest of cravats;
The blackest suit; and, on my brow
  The neatest of crush-hats.
And yet, I was the oddest kind
  Of guy you ever met,
Before I chanced to give my mind
  To "Hints on Etiquette."

A PLAIN ANSWER

(TO A CIVIL QUESTION.)

BRIGHT creature of impulse, you bid me be gay.
I would gladly adopt the suggestion,
But candour compels me sincerely to say
That I don't like the tone of your question.
In a voice that recalls the soft murmur of bees,
And in syllables sweet as their honey,
You say "Mamma wishes to know, if you please,
When you mean to begin to be funny?"

To-night, giddy child, when I enter'd the room
My inducement, believe me, was only
A hope that the wine-cup and dance might illume
For one evening a life that is lonely.

In this region of pleasure my clouded career
  May be thought for a time pretty sunny;
I 'll join in the valse or the banquet, my dear,
  But I *cannot* begin to be funny.

Go, tell your Mamma that the sun *may* arise
  On a day when my cares shall have left me;
When Time shall once more have brought back, as he flies,
  All the hopes of which Time has bereft me.
Yes, the day may arrive that shall see me content
  With my share of health, talent, and money:
Then, fitly to hail that auspicious event,
  I will try to begin to be funny!

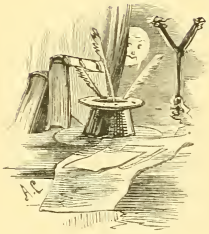
IN A HUNDRED YEARS.

AN extra smile or a burst of tears—
A fine to-day or a dull to-morrow—
A taste more joy or a drop more sorrow—
All the same in a hundred years.

A thousand hopes or a thousand fears—
A lifetime sad or a lifetime wasted—
A cup drain'd empty or left untasted—
All the same in a hundred years.

If things were thus, as one often hears,
I 'd seize the pleasure, I 'd leave the sorrow—
Enjoy to-day and defy to-morrow—
All the same in a hundred years.

EVENING.



YE birds, beneath your little wings
Go hide your little heads ;
For oh ! the pleasantest of things
On earth are feather-beds.
Go, seek your pens, my little sheep,
(And slumber while ye may ;)
My own will rob me of my sleep
Until the purple day.

Shine on above the chimney-pots,
O placid Evening Star :
While gazing at you *à la* WATTS,
" I wonder what you are."

You rose on Eden, happy place!
  And still your smiles relieve
The woes and wants of ADAM'S race,
  Delightful Star of Eve.

The nightingales are all about—
  Their song is everywhere—
Their notes are lovely (though they 're out
  So often in the air),
The zephyr, dancing through the tops
  Of ash and poplar, weaves
Low melodies, and scarcely stops
  To murmur, "By your leaves!"

Night steeps the passions of the day
  In quiet, peace, and love.
Pale Dian, in her tranquil way,
  Kicks up a shine above.
Oh, I could bless the hour that brings
  All deep and dear delight,
Unless I had a lot of things
  To polish off to-night.

MY POLITICS.

WHEN I look at our present condition,
And gather the state of the realm
From the names that adorn Opposition
And those of our men at the helm;
I acknowledge that, after perusing
My *Telegraph*, *Standard*, and *Star*,
'Tis a task not a little confusing
To find what my politics are

By an ultra-Conservative journal
I'm told that we're all to give thanks
For a Ministry quite as paternal
As any from Liberal ranks.

By the next, in as urgent a manner,
  I 'm warn'd against going so far
As to mount the Conservative banner,
  Whatever my politics are.

It is easy to draw my deduction—
  The papers explain at a glance,
That the Tories are all for obstruction—
  The Liberals all for advance.
But, in spite of the Press and its drilling,
  If I live to the age of old PARR,
I shall never be able or willing
  To say what my politics are.

THE MISERIES OF GENIUS.

IS thine to share, O lady fair,
The throng's ignoble strife—
The rout, the bail, the banquet-hall,
And Fashion's empty life.
Be thine the wiles and hollow smiles
That Wealth to Beauty pays,
But envy not the poet's lot
In our prosaic days.

O lady bright, the sleepless night—
The vigil of despair,
And, worse than all, the critic's gall
Are not for thee to bear.
The town's *élite* is at thy feet,
And Folly lisps thy praise;

Oh, envy not the poet's lot
  In our prosaic days.

Mine eyes are blue—Byronic hue!—
  I turn my collar down;
Methinks I wear the longest hair
  Of any bard in town.
Yet, bitter fact, my looks attract
  The public's mocking gaze:
Oh, envy not the poet's lot
  In our prosaic days.

I cannot find one lofty mind,
  One publisher of sense;
And so my rhymes are oftentimes
  Brought out at *my* expense.
I could not *sell*—I know it well—
  Ten copies of my lays;
Oh, envy not the poet's lot
  In our prosaic days.

Ah, lady mine, dost seek to twine
  A coronal of song?

Trust him who knows what heavy woes
  To poesy belong.
Forget the fame that gilds the name
  Of one who wins the bays;
And envy not the poet's lot
  In our prosaic days.

A DAY FOR WISHING.

CANNOT mind my wheel to-
day—
The weather is as hot as
blazes;
I wish that I could get away
To anywhere you like, and play
Among the buttercups and
daisies.

I wish I had a silly book
(Most easily fulfill'd of wishes)
To read beside a crystal brook—
Or else a rod, a line, a hook,
And lots of gentles for the fishes.

I wish that I were lying, prone
  And idle, where the trees are shady—
Contemplative and quite alone,
Or talking in an undertone
  To some beloved and lovely lady.

But, though I feel to-day a call
  For reading silly books, or fishing,
Or idling where the trees are tall,
Or making love—yet, most of all,
  I wish I knew the good of wishing.

THE DILIGENCE DRIVER.

PABLO PUIG is a family man,
A Catholic staunch and a Catalan.
Her Majesty's mails he hath to drive
His oaths are many, his horses five.
Alerte, caballitos!

Master is he of a clumsy craft,
Cranky forward and cranky aft;
A thing of a weird and ogglesome kind,
Cab in the front and 'bus behind.
Alerte, caballitos!

Yet Pablo Puig in his inmost soul
Is fond of his calling, upon the whole;
Many might think it *infra dig.*,
But there's little of pride in Pablo Puig.
Alerte, caballitos!

His visage is dark, his garb grotesque,
And he wears a touch of the picturesque,
A certain *chic* which possibly springs
From his horror of soap and of such-like things.
Alerte, caballitos!

To him there is little or no romance
In the mountain border of Spain and France;
But how he would wonder and stare, poor man,
At a moment's view of a Pickford's van.
Alerte, caballitos!

THE BALLAD OF THE BARYTONE.

A SIMPLE barytone am I—
A thing of light and joy;
And peacefully my days go by
As when I was a boy.
Of Rank and Fame let worldlings dream,
They have no charms for *me*.
Far, far above them I esteem
My own—my upper G.

Oh music! sure thou dost belong
To soft Italia's clime,
Where Life and Love and sunny Song
Seem ever in their prime.

The feebler ballads of the North
  Are much too cold for me;
'Tis not for these I summon forth
  My own—my upper G.

I love the Bacchanalian strain
  In which Parisians deal;
And that which dark-eyed sons of Spain
  Attempt in Old Castille.
No matter from what favour'd spot
  The melody may be;
Provided it transcendeth not
  My own—my upper G.

It greets me in my festal hours,
  It brings my gloom relief;
It sprinkles life with loveliest flowers
  And plucks the sting from grief.
I 'd smile at poverty and pain;
  I 'd welcome death with glee—
If till the last I might retain
  My own—my upper G!

SONGS OF THE SICK ROOM.

No. 1. Cod Liver Oil.

ON the bleak shore of Norway, I 've lately been told,
Large numbers of cod-fish are found,
And the animals' livers are afterwards sold
At so many "pfennigs" per pound;
From which is extracted, with infinite toil,
A villainous fluid called cod-liver oil!

Now, I don't mind a powder, a pill, or a draught—
Though I mingle the former with jam—
And many 's the mixture I 've cheerfully quaff'd,
And the pill I have gulp'd like a lamb.
But then I envelop my pills in tin-foil,
And I can't do the same with my cod-liver oil!

In the course of my lifetime I 've swallow'd enough
  To have floated a ship of the line,
And it 's purely the fault of this horrible stuff
  That I 've ceased to enjoy ginger wine.
For how can you wonder to see me recoil
From a liquor I mix'd with my cod-liver oil?

There are few deeds of daring from which I should quail—
  There are few things I 'd tremble to do—
But there 's one kind of tonic that makes me turn pale,
  And quite spoils my appetite, too;
But, you see, just at present, I 've got none to spoil—
So I don't mind alluding to cod-liver oil!

No. 2. Night and Morning.

They brought to my couch (I had not slept a wink,
  For brooding all night on my ills)
A neat-looking bottle of something to drink,
  And a neat-looking box full of pills.

A neat-looking label attracted my sight,
  The neck of the bottle adorning,
Saying, "Please to take two of the pills every night
  And a sixth of the draught in the morning."

After slowly perusing these words once or twice,
  In a deeply contemplative way,
I exclaim'd, what a volume of useful advice
  Does this one little sentence convey!
My friends, though to-day may seem cloudless and bright,
  Neglect not to-morrow's dark warning;
And oh! while you're taking the pills of to-night,
  Forget not the draught in the morning!

No. 3. General Debility.

My cheeks are pale, mine eyes are weak,
  I've cramp in every joint;
My jaws are toothless, and my beak
  Is fractured—near the point.

In youth, by falling from a tree,
  I broke my boyish spine;
And never yet did mortal see
  Such hideous legs as mine.

In early life my skull was crack'd,
  By tumbling down a drain,
And ever since my head is rack'd
  With agonising pain.

But though misfortunes thickly come,
  This thought consoles my mind—
If I had not been deaf and dumb,
  Perhaps I should be blind.

THE COMPACT.

A DARK German legend survives to this day,
Which relates to a Göttingen student,
Who came by his talent for music, they say,
At a much higher price than was prudent.
I'd rather not mention the bargain he made,—
But his playing was reckon'd so clever
As even to put Doctor Liszt in the shade,
And extinguish Herr Thalberg for ever.

My hero was anxious his rivals should see
How completely he beat them all hollow;
So he sent round his cards for æsthetics and tea,
With some meerschaums and music to follow.

Then round his respected mahogany met
All the wisdom of Göttingen city;
And History mentions that one of the set
(*Not* a German) was decently witty.

Of course the disputing and noise was immense,
As is always the case with deep thinkers;
But I hear that the tea showed its excellent sense,
By agreeing with most of its drinkers.
Then the music began, and the guests open'd fire,
With fugues, and sonatas, and such-like;
Which are things that we Englishmen don't much admire,
Though they're just what the Germans and Dutch like.

Our hero stepp'd forth, and his countenance shone
With that mixture of stern resolution
And graceful reserve that a martyr puts on,
When he walks to his own execution.
He turn'd back his cuffs and he put back his hair,
And, after these grave preparations,
Sat down and perform'd an original air,
With a dozen superb variations.

When he fancied his audience was growing more warm,
  And the interest rapidly height'ning,
He treated the room to an improvised storm,
  With abundance of thunder and lightning.
It seemed as if peal after peal rent the sky,
  With a rumbling sepulchral and hollow;
And fierce lurid flashes pour'd forth from on high,
  With a speed that no mortal could follow.

Of course such a state of affairs could not last,
  And the player at length made his mind up,
By a whirlwind of octaves play'd furious and fast,
  To bring the display to a wind-up.
He finish'd his piece and look'd modestly round,
  Expecting loud cheers and *encoring;*—
Imagine his utter disgust when he found
  Every soul in the company snoring.

He summon'd his tempter in fury, they say,
  And accused him of treacherous dealings,
In selling him powers that were quite thrown away,
  Amongst wretches who hadn't got feelings.

"Well, I own," said the Fiend, "they are not well-behaved,
But you 're certainly one of the flat sort
If you fancy that Christians who hope to be saved
Would be partial to *music of that sort!*"

THE VISION OF THE ALDERMAN.

AN Alderman sat at his festive board,
Quaffing the blood-red wine,
And many a Bacchanal stave outpour'd
In praise of the fruitful vine.
Turtle and salmon and Strasbourg pie,
Pippins and cheese were there;
And the bibulous Alderman wink'd his eye,
For the sherris was old and rare.

But a cloud came over his gaze eftsoons,
And his wicked old orbs grew dim;
Then drink turn'd each of the silver spoons
To a couple of spoons for *him.*
He bow'd his head on the festive board,
By the gaslight's dazzling gleam:
He bow'd his head and he slept and snored,
And he dream'd a fearful dream.

For, carried away on the wings of Sleep,
  His spirit was onward borne,
Till he saw vast holiday crowds in Chepe
  On a Ninth November morn.
Guns were booming and bells ding-dong'd,
  Ethiop minstrels play'd;
And still, wherever the burghers throng'd,
  Brisk jongleurs drove their trade.

Scarlet Sheriffs, the City's pride,
  With a portly presence fill'd
The whole of the courtyard just outside
  The hall of their ancient Guild.
And, in front of the central gateway there,
  A marvellous chariot roll'd,
(Like gingerbread at a country-fair
  'Twas cover'd with blazing gold.)

And a being array'd in pomp and pride
  Was brought to the big stone gate;
And they begg'd that being to mount and ride
  In that elegant coach of state.

But, oh! he was fat, so ghastly fat
  Was that being of pomp and pride,
That, in spite of many attempts thereat,
  He *couldn't* be push'd inside.

That being was press'd, but press'd in vain,
  Till the drops bedew'd his cheek;
The gilded vehicle rock'd again,
  And the springs began to creak.
The slumbering alderman groan'd a groan,
  For in vision he seem'd to trace
Some horrible semblance to *his own*,
  In that being's purple face.

And "Oh!" he cried, as he started up;
  "Sooner than come *to that*,
Farewell for ever the baneful cup
  And the noxious turtle fat!"—
They carried him up the winding-stair;
  They laid him upon the bed;
And they left him, sleeping the sleep of care,
  With an ache in his nightcapp'd head.

EVENING DRESS.

LIKE to spend an evening out
In music and in mirth;
I think a party is about
The finest fun on earth:
And if I rarely patronise
The gay and giddy throng,
'Tis not, my friend, that I despise
The revel, dance, and song:
But I 've a dread I can't express
Of going out in Evening Dress.

I 'm partial to the British stage;
And—spite of its decline—
The Drama, from a tender age,
Has been a love of mine.

You ask me why I seldom go,
  And why I always sit
In one distinct, unvaried row—
  (The second of the pit);
'Tis not because it costs me less,
But all along of Evening Dress.

I hate the habits which denote
  The slave to Fashion's rule;
I hate the black, unwieldy coat
  Which makes one look a fool.
I execrate the Gibus hat
  (Collapsing with a spring),
The shiny boots, the white cravat,
  And nearly everything
That 's worn by dandies who profess
To be *au fait* in Evening Dress.

My braces break—a button goes—
  My razor gives a slip,
And cuts me either on my nose
  Or else upon my lip;

Or, while I 'm cabbing to the place,
  A lot of mud or dirt
Gets plaster'd either on my face,
  Or else upon my shirt.
In fact, I always make a mess
Of that confounded Evening Dress.

WINE.

A Scientific Drinking Song.

GO, bring me the goblet that maddens my soul :
Where the sulphate of copper lurks deep in the bowl ;
Where the saccharine matter tastes richly intense,
And the brain-turning alcohol threatens the sense.
Deleterious acids, I laugh ye to scorn,
For one alkali kills ye, when taken at morn ;
And I know that a towel tied wet round my brow,
May demolish the headache that hangs o'er me now.

No matter what vintage—no matter what name—
To the brave Bacchanalian all wines are the same :
For the best of Champagne and the mildest of Cape
Are alike manufactured from juice of the grape.

What matters it whether the North or the South
May have yielded its blood for the epicure's mouth?
What matters it whether the East or the West
May have sent the rich fluid that gladdens this breast?

Amidst Burgundy's hills or the plains of Bordeaux
May the national fruit long continue to grow.
May the art of fermenting improve day by day,
And the vatting take place in its usual way.
And, oh! may the heads of our State persevere
In their efforts to crush the rude stimulant, Beer.
By providing Great Britain the means to import
A superior claret at ninepence a quart!

MY ULTIMATUM.

WHO speaks to me of "giving up,"
Or thinks about despairing?
Who says the bitter in his cup
Is bitter past the bearing?
For *me*, I feel the thing to do
(Let Fate be hard or tender)
Is—like *La Garde* at Waterloo—
To die and not surrender.

What struggles I myself have had;
Escapes how very narrow!
My first affray was with a lad
Who bore a bow and arrow.

If I should ever meet again
  That young and old offender,
I see my course before me plain—
  To die and not surrender.

In youth I ran a race to snatch
  A laurel from Apollo,
Whom very few contrive to catch
  Though very many follow.
Amid the throng in search of song—
  With bards of either gender—
E'en yet I pant and limp along,
  To die and not surrender.

I strove with Plutus day and night,
  But left the field in dudgeon ;
And now I wage a fiercer fight
  With Tempus, old curmudgeon.
Go on, Destroyer ; *you* destroy,
  But Art shall be the mender.
"Gray hair?" I'll get a wig, old boy,
  Or *dye* and not surrender!

ALL ALONE.

A Lay of the Morte Saison.

MY Brown has gone away to Greece,
My Robinson to Rome;
My Jones was off to-day for Nice,
And I am still at home.
One friend is on the Tiber,
Another on the Rhone,
The third a *bock*-imbiber—
And I am all alone.

The Row is dull as dull can be;
Deserted is the Drive;
The glass that stood at eighty-three
Stands now at sixty-five.
The summer days are over;
The town, ah, me! has flown
Through Dover or to clover—
And I am all alone.

I hate the mention of Lucerne,
  Of Baden and the Rhine;
I hate the Oberland of Berne,
  And Alp and Apennine.
I hate the wilds of Norway,
  As here I sit and moan—
With none to cross my doorway—
  For I am all alone.

Brick streets do not a prison make,
  Nor hollow squares a cell;
And so for Memory's pleasant sake,
  I'll bear my sorrows well.
My lyre may lose the gladness
  That mark'd its former tone;
But, oh! respect my sadness—
  For I am all alone.

"OH NIGHTS AND SUPPERS," ETC.

FATE grant us again such a meeting
Of music, and wisdom, and wit—
Where Mirth may make sure of a greeting,
And Care of a notice to quit.
With our long and yet fast-flying nights,
And with six clever dogs for a quorum—
We still may revive the delights
Of our *Noctes cœnœque deorum.*

Long nights, to be long recollected;
Short nights, can I shortly forget,
How punning went mad, and infected
The soberest brains in our set;--

How the quips and the cranks running round
  Put a stopper to mental decorum ;—
How Laughter was monarch, and crown'd
  At our *Noctes cœnœque deorum?*

Not always in lightness, however,
  Our nights and our suppers were spent ;—
At times we could cease to be clever,
  Could speak with a nobler intent.
And an eloquence fresh from the heart
  (Not unworthy the Senate or Forum)
Bore often a prominent part
  In our *Noctes cœnœque deorum.*

Our circle was rarely completed
  Without one musician at least,
So Melody came to be treated
  As welcomest fare at the feast.
From the breathings of Italy's lyre
  Up to fugues *à la mode Germanorum,*
We'd plenty to hear and admire
  At our *Noctes cœnœque deorum.*

THE WEATHER.

I HAVE my share of common sense,
But no imagination :
I never made the least pretence
To shine in conversation.
I dare not stray in any way
An inch beyond my tether ;
And, when I 've nothing else to say,
I talk about the weather.

When MARY ANN and I go out
I long to play the lover,
But what on earth to talk about
I never can discover.
I blush to say I often show
The whitest kind of feather,
And stammer out, " Look here, you know—
Let 's talk about the weather."

I 've run a bill at Mr SNIP'S
  For articles of raiment ;
He always has upon his lips
  A hint about its payment.
Whenever Mr SNIP and I
  Are left alone together,
You can't imagine how I try
  To talk about the weather.

I go to parties now and then,
  But never find it answer :
I 'm forced to mix among the men
  Because I 'm not a dancer.
I merely put on evening dress—
  White kid and patent leather—
On purpose that I may express
  My thoughts about the weather.

"ON CORPULENCE.'

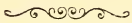
THE town 's in a panic, from peer to mechanic,
Since BANTING has issued his *Tract for the Times;*
That queer publication made such a sensation,
That corpulence *now* seems the greatest of crimes.
Folks fancy good feeding a proof of ill breeding,
And stick to low diet through thick and through thin,
Till they find that their best coats, and trousers, and waistcoats,
Are perfectly "done for," if not "taken in."

Each day it grows harder to find a good larder,
And lean diners-out will, of course, suffer most;
For those who are thinnish won't care to diminish
What little they've got for the sake of the host.
But the House of Correction will grant them protection,
(Supposing Society starves them outright,)
Where pickers and stealers and such evil dealers
Are feasted like aldermen morning and night.

Sincerely I pity our friends in the City,
And Mansion-House banquets cut short in their prime,
Where, 'mid roses and myrtle, the love of mock-turtle
"Now melts into sorrow, now maddens to crime."
If I were a sheriff, I'd never be terrified
Into adopting this Barmecide tone;
For I'd throw up my station in *their* corporation
Before they induced me to part with *my own!*

If you wish to grow thinner, diminish your dinner,
And take to light claret instead of pale ale;
Look down with an utter contempt upon butter,
And never touch bread till it's toasted—or stale.

You must sacrifice gaily six hours or so daily
  To muscular exercise, outdoor and in ;
While a very small number devoted to slumber
  Will make a man healthy, and wealthy, and *thin!*



THE MOONLIGHT SONATA.

(By a Musical Maniac.)

FIRST MOVEMENT.

LAZILY, cloudlets, over the Moon,
(Veiling little, if aught ye veil)
Vapours across the starlight strewn,
Sail for ever, if *thus* ye sail.
Idle breezes out of the West,
Let them linger in phantom forms.
Night, be still as an infant's rest;
Banish the darkness, chain the storms.

Hush, my spirit, be calm as Night;
  Sorrow is calm, but it is not peace.
Heralds of tempest, over the light,
  Storm-clouds hurry and will not cease.
Eyes are dim that were bright and blue,
  Hands were warm that are long since cold;
Both lie under the shading yew,
  Both lie under the churchyard mould.

SECOND MOVEMENT.

THE Elves! the tiny tricksy Elves;
They love to treat their dainty selves,
        To dancing in the night-time.
'Tis twelve o'clock—the fairy hour;
For hark! the sounds from yonder tow'n
        Inform me that 's the right time.

Here comes the laughing, rabble rout;
See, see—they frisk around, about,
        In every kind of antic.

And there's the king—the queen—the court—
The clergy, and the common sort—
All absolutely frantic.

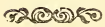
My goodness gracious, here's a game!
I'm so delighted that I came
To brood upon my sorrow.
A melancholy muff I've been;
But, after this delightful scene,
I'll come again to-morrow.

LAST MOVEMENT.

HURRICANE signals gather apace
Thickly over the pale moon's face;
Masses of blackness looming forth,
South'ard and eastward, west and north,
Wild wind veering, ever and aye,
Over the compass—over the sky.
Mutter of thunder, lurid gleams,
Rain that clashes in deluge-streams.

Over the wheat-fields, over the stiles,
Two-and-a-quarter of English miles.
Boots that cannot exclude the wet ;
Clothes the thinnest that cash can get.
Far away, in the homely cot,
Stands my gingham—the best I 've got.
Never so much as a Macintosh ;
Never a cape, or an odd galosh !

(*Chord in the minor*, *FF.*)



OCCASIONAL

VERSES.

CHATEAUX D'ESPAGNE.

(A Reminiscence of "David Garrick" and "the Castle of Andalusia.")

ONCE upon an evening weary,
shortly after Lord Dundreary
With his quaint and curious humour set the town in such a roar,
With my shilling I stood rapping
—only very gently tapping—
For the man in charge was napping
—at the money-taker's door.
It was Mr Buckstone's playhouse,
where I linger'd at the door;
Paid half price and nothing
more.

Most distinctly I remember, it was just about September—
Though it might have been in August, or it might have been before—
Dreadfully I fear'd the morrow. Vainly had I sought to borrow;
For (I own it to my sorrow) I was miserably poor,
And the heart is heavy laden when one's miserably poor;
(I have been so once before.)

I was doubtful and uncertain, at the rising of the curtain,
If the piece would prove a novelty, or one I'd seen before;
For a band of robbers drinking in a gloomy cave, and clinking
With their glasses on the table, I had witness'd o'er and o'er;
Since the half-forgotten period of my innocence was o'er;
Twenty years ago or more.

Presently my doubt grew stronger. I could stand the thing no longer,
"Miss," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore.
Pardon my apparent rudeness. Would you kindly have the goodness
To inform me if this drama is from Gaul's enlighten'd shore?"
For I know that plays are often brought us from the Gallic shore;
Adaptations—nothing more!

So I put the question lowly: and my neighbour answer'd slowly;
"It's a British drama wholly, written quite in days of yore.
'Tis an Andalusian story of a castle old and hoary,
And the music is delicious, though the dialogue be poor!"
(And I could not help agreeing that the dialogue *was* poor:
Very flat, and nothing more.)

But at last a lady entered, and my interest grew center'd
In her figure, and her features, and the costume that she wore.
And the slightest sound she utter'd was like music; so I mutter'd
To my neighbour, "Glance a minute at your play-bill, I implore.
Who's that rare and radiant maiden? Tell, oh, tell me! I implore.'
Quoth my neighbour, "Nelly Moore!"

Then I ask'd in quite a tremble—it was useless to dissemble—
"Miss, or Madam, do not trifle with my feelings any more;
Tell me who, then, was the maiden, that appear'd so sorrow laden
In the room of David Garrick, with a bust above the door?"
(With a bust of Julius Cæsar up above the study door.)
Quoth my neighbour, "Nelly Moore."

* * * * *

I've her photograph from Lacy's; that delicious little face is
Smiling on me as I'm sitting (in a draught from yonder door),

And often in the nightfalls, when a precious little light falls
From the wretched tallow candles on my gloomy second-floor.
(For I have not got the gaslight on my gloomy second-floor,)
Comes an echo, "Nelly Moore!"

TO A CERTAIN SOMEBODY.

(DEDICATED TO MISS E. FARREN, LATE OF THE OLYMPIC THEATRE.)

ALL hail, my BEST and BELLINGHAM,
Olympic brother-bards!
I am sorry that the critics have
been down upon ye lately.
Permit me to present ye both my very
best regards,
And to tell ye that I count myself
indebted to ye greatly.
I will enter to your credit all the talent ye may claim;
For the sake, my BEST and BELLINGHAM, of Little What's-her-
name.

I have yielded, I confess it, quite a dozen times before
  To the fatal fascinations of the darlings of the Drama.
I have idolised my WILTON, I have loved my NELLY MOORE;
  And I see a host of others in a sort of panorama,
Reaching downwards to MISS THINGAMY—an evanescent flame,
Whom I sacrificed a month ago for Little What 's-her-name.

The man who takes the money for my shillingsworth of pit
  Has an aggravating habit of alluding to the weather;
And I never fail to notice, from the corner where I sit,
  That the feminine attendants take to whispering together.
The fiddlers in the orchestra do very much the same;
For they *know* that I 'm the worshipper of Little What 's-her-name.

I met her, quite promiscuous, a week or two ago;
  To see her was to recognise—young Love 's a pretty tutor—
She was affably conversing with a man I didn't know;
  But I fancied, in my jealousy, 'twas probably her suitor.
It *might* have been a relative; but was it not a shame
That I couldn't breathe my sentiments to Little What 's-her-name?

I should like to make a tender of my heart and of my hand,
  (For it strikes me that at present I have nothing else to proffer;)
But since I 've neither intellect nor money at command,
  She would probably insult me by declining such an offer.
It 's not so much the intellect—if Fortune, fickle dame,
Would grant me only opulence and Little What 's-her-name.

Will she read this emanation of a long-endured despair
  With a particle of pity or an atom of emotion?
Will she linger for a moment o'er the verses that declare
  All the fondness and the fulness of a Nobody's devotion?
I should seek no other honour—I should ask no higher fame
Than a corner in the memory of Little What 's-her-name.

THE LORD MAYOR'S APOTHEOSIS.

A Civic Ode.

ALDERMAN HALE — though slightly pale—
Seem'd nevertheless determined
To do his duty on Lord Mayor's Day;
So he wash'd his face in a careful way
(Though he hated anything like display),
And he brush'd his hair—of a brownish gray.
His robe was scarlet, and people say,
That its edges were thickly ermined.

But let us leave him for a while,
And hurry to Guildhall,
Where stout police (in single file),
In tight cravat and shiny tile,
Parade before the gloomy pile—
Right stalwart men and tall.

See, in their garb of modest green,
Around the court-yard stand
Our Volunteers! Ah, ne'er, I ween,
Were truer, braver warriors seen,
To fight for Alderman or Queen,
And guard our native land.

Tis twelve o'clock; the bells of Bow are clanging in the steeple,
While visible anxiety prevails among the people.
The cannons in St James's Park announce the noontide hour;
And the time is also mention'd by the cannons at the Tower.

It comes: the wish'd-for pageant comes! Observe the mailéd knights.
Observe the squires who follow them (in somewhat seedy tights).
Observe the noble chargers, too. Methinks I've heard it said,
That E. T. Smith doth furnish them at three-and-six a head.

Make way there for the Volunteers!—make way there for the
Band!
Their home is on the battlefield; their march is "In the Strand."
Make way, too, for the Aldermen, recumbent in their coaches,
And make more way *than ever* for the *gingerbread* approaches!

Then, from all the people there,
A shout arose and rent the air—
"Send him victorious,
Happy and glorious;
Fill him with turtle,
And crown him with myrtle,
And long live the Great Lord Mayor!!!"

THE END OF AN OLD YEAR.

"The Old Year lies a-dying."

"*LE Roi est mort!*" is mutter'd round the bed;
"Long live the King!" we cry in louder chorus:
We know that, when a year is lying dead,
A year is all before us.

To-night a dozen months of joy and care,
Of ancient fellowships and new bissensions.
Are left behind us; and the frosty air
Is thick with good intentions.

We scarcely heed the lessons of the sun—
His daily risings and his daily settings;
But, when our *years* are setting one by one
We sum up all regrettings.

Let us recall the losses, not the gains,
Of many a yesterday we spent in sorrow
And count upon the pleasures, not the pains
Of many a bright to-morrow.

'Tis well that we should meet the coming year
And what it brings us with a bold reliance;
That we should show a faith without a fear—
A trust with no defiance.

'Tis well—since all humanity must brave
The doubtful current of Time's mighty river—
To throw ourselves upon its yawning wave
Without a craven shiver.

To-night we end one chapter of a book—
  From every page some weighty moral gleaning ,
And, when the story closes, we may look
  To find the Author's meaning.